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Mary H. Deane.

with the best wishes

of her affectionate uncle

Robert

Thursday

Feby 24th 1853.

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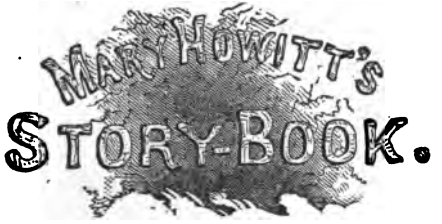

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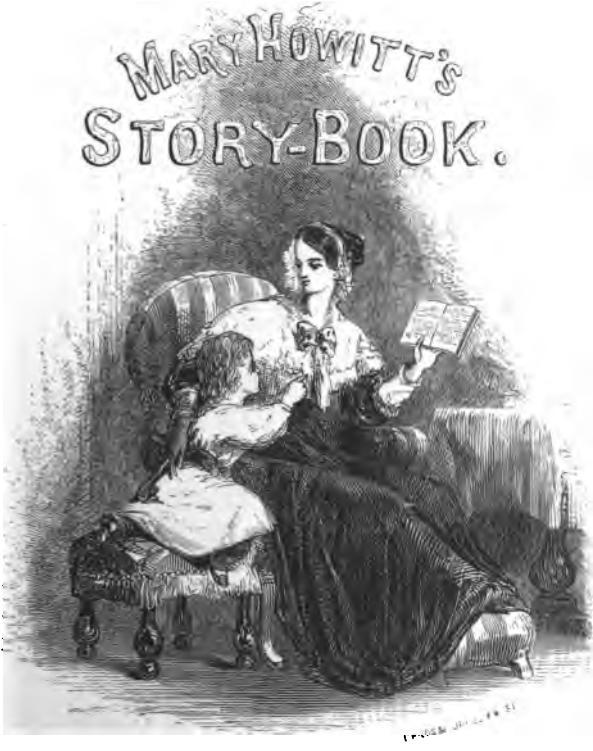

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MARY HOWITT'S

STORY BOOK:

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

NEW YORK:
C. S. FRANCIS & CO., 252 BROADWAY.
BOSTON:
J. H. FRANCIS, 128 WASHINGTON STREET.
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Part X.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE;

AND OTHER STORIES.

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

AWAKE, arise, good Christians,
Let nothing you dismay;
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day!

The self-same moon was shining
That now is in the sky,
When a holy band of angels
Came down from God on high.

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Came down on clouds of glory,
Arrayed in shining light,
Unto the shepherd-people,
Who watched their flocks by night.

And through the midnight silence
The heavenly host began,
"Glory to God the highest;
On earth good-will to man!

"Fear not, we bring good tidings,
For, on this happy morn,
The promised one, the Saviour,
In Bethlehem town is born!

Up rose the joyful shepherds
From the ground whereon they lay,
As ye should rise, good Christians,
To hail this blessed day!

Up rose the simple shepherds,
All with a joyful mind;
"And let us go, with speed," said they,
"This holy child to find!"

Not in a kingly palace
The Son of God they found,
But in a lowly manger
Where oxen fed around.

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The glorious king of heaven;
The Lord of all the earth,
In mercy condescended
To be of humble birth.

There worshipped him the wise men,
As prophets had foretold;
And laid their gifts before him,
Frankincense, myrrh, and gold.

Long looked the simple shepherds,
With holy wonder stirred,
Then praised God for all the things
Which they had seen and heard.

And homeward went rejoicing,
Upon that Christmas morn,
Declaring unto every one
That Jesus Christ was born.

That he was born,—the Saviour,
The promised one of old;
That they had seen the Son of God,
To every one they told.

And like unto the shepherds,
We wander far and near,
And bid ye wake, good Christians,
The joyful news to hear.

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THE STORY OF LITTLE CRISTAL.

ITTLE CRISTAL'S mother was Barbara; she died soon after he was born, and left him to the care of Nancy. Barbara and Nancy were both poor; they lived in a dark, gloomy court, which turned out of an alley in the very heart of London; a broken wooden staircase led up to their room, for they lived together; they had one bed, a very poor one, and but little to cover them.

Little Cristal lay in his mother's bosom, and helped to keep her warm, and when she was dead he lay in Nancy's arms, and communicated the warmth of his little body to

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her. Nancy was not a young woman as Barbara had been; neither was she handsome nor good tempered, but I need not describe her; what she was you will find out. She was, as I told you, very poor, and as she had promised Barbara to be a mother to her child, she had to work for his support as well as her own. All day long she sate crouched on a stone step in one of the most public streets of London and sold dolls dressed in crotchet work, which she was doing all the time; she was the first person who invented little crotchet parasols, and while the thing was new, she had a great run for them; those were golden days to her, but before a month was over she had so many rivals and imitators that her sale sank down again to a doll a day. Not far from her stood, in another recess of the street, a man who sold dog-collars; he was a neighbor of hers, and his name was Ephraim. Little Cristal, who was now six years old, was very fond of Ephraim; he had another trade besides selling dog-collars, and that was catching birds, which he sold to a man in Seven Dials. He went out early on Sunday

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mornings, while it was yet grey dawn; and walked many miles into the country with his snares and his decoys to some pleasant woodland fields or breezy downs, where he caught the birds. Now and then he would take Cristal with him, and nothing delighted the child more than this; the grey dawn, the golden sunrise, the masses of opal-colored cloud that opened a pathway as it were for the ascending sun, filled him with inconceivable joy. Ephraim never noticed these things himself, and yet when the little lad called his attention to them, he often replied with the scrap of a hymn or some odd text of scripture which had stuck, as it were, in a corner of his memory from the time when he had been a child like Cristal, and had been taught out of the Bible or the hymn-book by his mother. But those days were long and long gone by. Ephraim read neither in Bible nor hymn-book now; and yet he was not a bad man either; in some great pressure of poverty in former days he had pawned both Bible and hymn-book; he meant at that time to get them soon back again; but he never could manage it; so he had

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now been six and thirty years without either one or the other, and as to going to church or chapel, that was a thing he never thought of, because he never had decent clothes to his back.

Nancy was in these respects very like Ephraim, only that when she was a child she had had no good mother to teach her either out of Bible or hymn-book. She could not read herself, and therefore she never thought of little Cristal's learning; yet neither was Nancy wilfully wicked; she was very ignorant, and that was her misfortune. As far as she knew it she did what was right, and hence it was that she had saved the unhappy Barbara from a great, a very great misfortune; had become, as it were, a mother to her, and a true friend when she had none beside, for poor Barbara had thirsted and Nancy had given her to drink; she had been hungry and Nancy had fed her; she had been a stranger and Nancy had taken her in; she had been sick and in prison and Nancy had visited her; therefore we will not blame her, though she neither

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taught Cristal to read, nor yet took him to church nor chapel.

These Sunday rambles with Ephraim were the greatest pleasure that little Cristal knew. While the old man lay down and slept in the green fields amid the golden sunshine, Cristal lay down too, for he was not allowed to run about, lest he should disturb the birds, but he never slept. Sometimes he lay with his face to the grass, feasting his eyes and gladdening his little imprisoned soul, that was struggling as it were within him for light and love and freedom, with the beauty of a yellow cowslip, or crimson-tipped daisy; nay, even a blade of grass with its brown fibry roots taking hold of mother earth, as if it loved her bosom, filled him with inexpressible gladness, and yet he knew not why. At other times he lay on his back and gazed up into the blue and sunny infinity above him, finding beauty and sublimity in illimitable space; in the masses of summer cloud, whether they lay piled up like mountains of heaven, or were swept along on the viewless wings of the wind. All this poor little Cristal *felt*, but

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he understood nothing about it, excepting such little meanings as he gleaned up out of Ephraim's hymns and scraps of scripture.

It was in this way that he learned about God the Father; of Jesus Christ, I am sorry to say, he knew nothing, and that was a great pity, for he had a heart to have loved the Saviour—the poor child in the house of the carpenter. But nobody told him of these things, so he went on groping his way as best he could along the dark paths of ignorance, and never foregoing any little glimpse of truth or knowledge which came in upon his soul by the way. One thing, however, I must tell you; after Cristal came to have a little knowledge of God the Father, he never could bear to hear wicked people curse and swear, and though he knew nothing about the ten commandments, he felt as if he himself could not take the name of God in vain. Of angels, too, he had a dim but very pleasing idea from the same source; he often fancied that he saw angels in the sun-lighted clouds. The beautiful tropical flowers also that he saw, now and then. exhibited in gardeners' windows in London

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suggested to him, he did not know how or why, the idea of angels.

"Move on, you young rascal!" said the police to him many a time when he stood at the shop windows, wondering at and admiring the beautiful things which were there exhibited. Exquisitely chased vessels of silver; alabaster figures; fine engravings and paintings appealed, as it were, to some spirit within him, which could only thus make itself heard and felt.

It was a very populous court in which Cristal lived; besides Ephraim, he had another acquaintance, and this was a poor widow who went out washing. The widow lodged with a deformed young woman, who was a seamstress, and both were very poor. The widow had two valuables, a great old bible and a lark in a wicker cage, which was always hung out of her window by three o'clock on summer mornings, when she went out a-washing.

The lark sang in his cage glorious hymns to that freedom of which he was deprived; but as nobody understood the language of the bird, none knew how heart-touching and

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pathetic they really were. Cristal, who had always found it so delightful to go out with Ephraim to catch birds, had no idea of there being tyranny and cruelty in the thing. To his fancy, the litle decoy birds, that are trained by the cunning and wicked craft of man to beguile and betray their innocent and unsuspecting brethren of the fields, were the cleverest and most wonderful little creatures in the world. Ephraim made money by the birds he caught; it was an honest way of livelihood everybody thought, and that was enough.

The imprisoned lark that sang its eloquent anthems to the little bit of blue sky above that dirty and melancholy court, was the most beautiful and delightful thing which little Cristal found near his own home. If ever he got money enough, he resolved within himself, he would keep a lark. When the widow was at home, she allowed Cristal now and then to have a close view of the bird, because he never failed to bring home with him from his Sunday rambles a fresh sod for the prisoner. Little did the poor lark know the care that the child had taken to

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choose, as he thought, the most beautiful sod in the fields, and in which there was always a daisy, an orchis, or a cowslip root in flower.

The lovely speckled breast, the graceful form, the bright black eye, were characteristics of the most surpassing beauty to the soul of Cristal. "If ever I can get money enough I will keep a lark," said he to himself time after time; and whenever he walked through the streets, he never failed to stop at any shop where bird-cages were sold, to look out and see if there were one in sight which would do for his lark—when he got it.

One holiday in the autumn—it was not Sunday—Ephraim and Cristal went out together to collect plaintain seed for canaries. They went into the neighborhood of Wimbledon, which was a very favorite resort of Ephraim's. As they were walking slowly along the road, all at once there came sweeping along, like a whirlwind, a small troop of Life Guards in scarlet and gold, on splendid horses covered with glittering trappings. After these came several open carriages, in which sate, as it seemed to Cristal, the most beautiful ladies and the most magnificent

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gentlemen in the world. But that which struck him most was a little boy in hat and feathers and green velvet dress, who sate at the side of the principal lady. They passed on like a flash of lightning; another troop of guards came after them, and all were gone, leaving nothing behind but a cloud of dust, which almost smothered the poor wayfarers.

"It is her Majesty the Queen," said Ephraim, "I have often seen her when I have been hereabouts. She loves fast driving, and that little chap beside her is the Prince of Wales."

It was the first time that Cristal had seen the Queen and the Prince. A strange, melancholy feeling came over his soul, like a cloud obscuring the sunshine. He had often before seen grand carriages and grand people in the streets of London, but he had taken no notice of them; they were nothing to him, and neither troubled him nor gave him pleasure. It was a new feeling that he had now at the sight of the Prince; he did not envy him, nor feel angry; he only felt as he had often done at the sight of beautiful

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works of art; a yearning, as it were, for something more beautiful and more perfect than his own life afforded to him. Tears filled his eyes, and he asked Ephraim if he fancied that angels were like the Queen and the little Prince of Wales. Ephraim said may be they were; may be they were not; he could not tell.

All that day Cristal thought of what he had seen. Ephraim was more cheerful than ever, because he sold eighteen pennyworth of plantain seed on his way home; he treated himself to a pot of ale at a way-side public-house, and made Cristal drink with him. Ephraim calculated that they brought half-a-crown's worth home in their bags; he might well be in high spirits.

Much as Cristal loved Nancy, he could not have told her how he felt at sight of the Prince, because he did not understand his own feelings, and even had he been inclined to open his heart to her, he would not have done it, when he saw in what a bad temper she was when they reached home.

I have not told you yet that Nancy was often angry; she was very poor, and found

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great difficulty in getting money enough to buy bread and potatoes with, and to pay for her miserable room. On this particular day she was in a worse temper than common. She scolded Ephraim for taking out the lad, "lounging about," and she scolded Cristal for going with him. She said that he was now old enough to do something for his own living, and that she would make him do it.

The next morning, Cristal went out with three crotchet-dressed dolls in each hand, which he offered at two pence a piece. His life now grew harder than ever; Nancy thinking to make him industrious, and to teach him to mind his business, said, that unless he earned sixpence a day, he should have no supper; and you must remember that supper was everything to Cristal, because he never had any dinner. Nancy did not really mean to be as cruel as she was; she thought she was doing right, and her heart often ached when she sent the boy supperless to bed.

Winter came on; people did not want dolls with parasols, or even umbrellas, so nobody bought any. An old woman who sold wash-

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leathers often took compassion on him, and gave him of her poor victuals; and another who sold little slates in a very windy passage, told him that he should have seven little slates from her for fivepence, which he could easily sell for a penny a piece, and he might pay her when he got his money. She taught him how to hold them between his little fingers, like a sort of fan, and sent him to what she thought a good situation, near a great thoroughfare in the city.

Poor Nancy, who was so sorely pinched by poverty, was well pleased that these good women befriended the lad, and though his supper was scant enough at all times, I must do her the justice to say, that she fared no better herself.

Cristal stuck the little slates as he had been taught, between his thin, small fingers, but his hand soon grew tired, and he could not hold them firmly. About noon, when the throng of people was the thickest, a gentleman who had suddenly found himself the heir of a large property, leaped out of a cab, and ran across the pavement, to the lofty door of a great banking house, where his money

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was deposited. He was in great haste, and thinking of nothing but his good luck, jostled against Cristal, knocked the slates out of his weary hand, and set his heel upon them, crushing them all to pieces. Cristal's dismay and distress were inconceivable; the gentleman, who meant no harm, and whose good fortune made him in good humor with all the world, took a coin out of his pocket, the first that came to hand, and threw it to the boy; it fell to the pavement; Cristal saw it fall, and took it for a shilling, but in reality it was a sovereign. Before he could pick it up, the quick hand of a wicked young man snatched it from the ground, and darted away through the crowd; some of the people saw him do it, and were inclined to take Cristal's part; but just then somebody said that it was a trick of the lad's, who had thrown down his slates to get money from the gentleman, and therefore he deserved no pity. It was in vain that poor little Cristal cried and protested his innocence; those who had seen the money snatched away from him, were gone on their way, and those who remained, looked on Cristal as an artful boy,

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who only wanted to excite their pity, and get money from them.

The police told him to move off; and full of misery and indignation, he walked slowly along the pavement. He did not know, however, how great his loss had been; he believed that he had only lost one shilling, when in truth he had lost twenty.

The woman who had trusted him with the slates, would not believe him. She said that she saw now that she had been deceived in him, that he had sold the slates, and that this was all a tale made up, that he might keep all the money, and that as she could not afford to lose her property in that way, she would find out where he lived, and see his mother: for have the worth of the slates she would, that was certain!

Cristal did not tell her that he had no mother, and that Nancy, when she heard of this, would beat him. He turned away from her, weeping bitterly, and dared not go home. It was the first week in January, and bitterly cold. He felt the piercing cold to his very bone, for he had only in addition to the poor clothes which he wore in the summer, an

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old green and red comforter round his neck, and the cape of Nancy's cloak which she had lent to him, and which did not reach to his knees.

For the first time in his life he felt utterly miserable; fear, anger, and a sense of wrong and unjust accusation weighed upon his spirit, and almost crushed him to the ground.

Towards midnight he crept into the court where Nancy lived, and in this court there were some houses which had never been finished, and which had stood for years, black and melancholy objects of premature ruin. Within this place he found shelter for the night. Nancy, although she had insisted on his bringing home his sixpence every evening, was uneasy at his not coming home as usual. She loved him very much, and her intention was not to be cruel to him, but poverty made her hard and severe, and this must be her excuse; besides which, when she compared Cristal's life with her own as a child, his, even at the worst, was much happier than hers had been. Poverty has so many curses besides those of actual bodily

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suffering, and poor Nancy's nature was warped by these.

Cristal lay down in this miserable, windowless dwelling, and strange to say, soon fell fast asleep. In his sleep he dreamed; his dream was the most beautiful in the world; he dreamed of the young Prince of Wales; of angels; of sunshiny fields full of flowers, far more beautiful than any of those which he had seen in the gardeners' windows; the softest of breezes seemed to be fanning his cheek; birds were singing above and around him, and a sense of gladness, sufficiency, and freedom, seemed to make up his whole being. He dreamed that the little Prince, who, instead of a hat and streaming feather, wore a beautiful crown on his head, took him by the hand and said,—

"I will lead thee to my mother."

And then she that he supposed to be the Queen, was before him, and all at once he knew in some incomprehensible manner, that it was his own mother; that very Barbara of whom Nancy had so often spoken. While his mind was in a tumult of joy and wonder, a blaze of light seemed to dazzle him, a

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noise like thunder roared in his ears, and Cristal, waking from the lovely dream, started up from his miserable bed, and saw at once that that side of the court in which the widow lived was on fire: the flames were bursting from the windows of some of the houses, and fire-engines rushed into the court.

Whilst Cristal was yet dreaming, and before the fire had burst out, Nancy, who, as I said, was full of anxiety, had gone out into the cold blackness of night to look for him; she was very angry with him at the same time that she was very anxious, and she said to a drunken neighbor whom she met staggering home, that when she found him, she would thresh him to death; she did not really mean so, but it was her way of talking. Nancy went out, she knew not whither; the drunken man went home, lighted a candle and set fire to his bed, which was soon communicated to the whole wretched building.

Whilst Cristal, in terror and astonishment, looked round him, he saw that the flames had reached the widow's room; he could even see the shadow of the lark's cage within

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the window. The old woman and her lame lodger, thinking only of saving their lives, rushed into the court, dragging down part of their bedding and a few clothes. Without a moment's thought for himself, Cristal rushed up the broken stairs, and amid the smoke which filled the place preparatory to its bursting into flame, and snatched down the cage, below which lay the widow's large bible. He did not know the real worth of the book, but with a sort of instinctive impulse, he took it up also, and darted again down the stairs, being wetted to the skin with the water from the engines which was poured upon the burning houses.

Everybody who saw this courageous act of neighborly devotion, praised him; and while Cristal felt pleased with what he had done, the drunken man who had been the cause of all the mischief, and who was sobered by terror, took occasion to tell him how angry Nancy was; how she was gone out even then to search for him, and her dreadful threat on leaving the court.

The danger of the fire spreading further was over; the crowd began to disperse, and

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the police walked about to keep order. The night was bitterly cold, and little Cristal was wet to the skin, yet he dared not go home, because of Nancy's threat. He crouched down again therefore under the blackened walls of the unfinished building, and as it seemed to himself, went to sleep.

Wonderful things now happened to Cristal, such as neither philosopher nor poet has described, nor ever can, therefore it is not for me to tell you much ab ut them. This much however I do know, he seemed to wake, and yet how unlike any former awaking it was; he seemed to be himself, and yet how different to what he had ever before been: cold and hunger, want and suffering were no more. He remembered his admiration of the young Prince, but now he himself was more glorious than any earthly monarch, and yet there was no crown on his head, nor sceptre in his hand. This was London in which he stood; this was the very court in which he had lived, and yet at the same time it seemed filled with the glory of the Infinite. With his hands clasped palm to palm, against his breast, although no one

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had ever taught him to pray, he stood in silent wonder and adoration.

A policeman was the first who in the grey dusk of that winter's morning found the body of little Cristal; his wet clothes were frozen upon him, he had perished by the extreme cold of the night. Nancy who had returned to the court just after the fire was extinguished, heard from the widow how like a hero the boy had behaved, and how he had saved those very things which she valued so much, and yet in her terror had forgotten; the lark and the bible. The drunken neighbor also came up and informed her, how he too had seen Cristal, and had delivered to him her threatening message. Nancy felt relieved; and imagined that Cristal had taken shelter with some of the neighbors for the night.

The news reached her early the next morning, that the boy was found frozen under the wall. What an anguish then struck through her heart; her hard words pierced her like daggers. "Heaven help me!" groaned she. "I never yet said an

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unkind word, or did an unkind thing, without bitterly repenting it!"

Many a one beside Nancy has experienced this.

In that strange, new and glorious state in which Cristal now was, the anguish which Nancy endured, though known to him, caused him no grief, he knew that which the wisest men have been teaching us for ages, that out of suffering comes purification, and that there is hope for every one, who, in sincerity repents him of the evil that he has done.

The body of little Cristal lies in a pauper burial-ground, in a rude coffin furnished by the parish work-house.

May all of us so live that when like his, our bodies return to the dust, we may awake to that new existence, which, enfolding us with an increase of light and love, brings us yet nearer to the Divine Presence!

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MABEL ON MIDSUMMER DAY.

A TALE OF THE FAIRIES.

"RISE, my maiden, Mabel,"
The mother said, "arise,
For the golden sun of Midsummer
Is shining in the skies.

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"Arise, my little maiden,
For thou must speed away,
To wait upon thy grandmother
This livelong summer day.

"And thou must carry with thee
This wheaten cake so fine;
This new made pat of butter;
This little flask of wine!

"And tell the dear old body,
This day I cannot come,
For the good man went out yester-morn,
And he is not come home.

"And more than this, poor Amy
Upon my knee doth lie;
I fear me, with this fever-pain
The little child will die!

"And thou can'st help thy grandmother;
The table thou can'st spread;
Can'st feed the little dog and bird,
And thou can'st make her bed.

"And thou can'st fetch the water,
From the lady-well hard by;

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And thou can'st gatner from the wood
The fagots brown and dry.

"Can'st go down to the lonesome glen,
To milk the mother-ewe;
This is the work, my Mabel,
That thou wilt have to do.

"But listen now, my Mabel,
This is Midsummer-day,
When all the fairy people
From elf-land come away.

"And when thou art in lonesome glen,
Keep by the running burn,
And do not pluck the strawberry flower,
Nor break the lady-fern.——

"But think not of the fairy folk,
Lest mischief should befall;
Think only of poor Amy,
And how thou lov'st us all.

"Yet keep good heart, my Mabel,
If thou the fairies see,
And give them kindly answer
If they should speak to thee.

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"And when into the fir-wood
Thou go'st for fagots brown,
Do not, like idle children,
Go wandering up and down.

"But, fill thy little apron,
My child, with earnest speed;
And that thou break no living bough
Within the wood, take heed.

"For they are spiteful brownies
Who in the wood abide,
So be thou careful of this thing,
Lest evil should betide.

"But think not, little Mabel,
Whilst thou art in the wood,
Of dwarfish, wilful brownies,
But of the Father good.

"And when thou goest to the spring,
To fetch the water thence,
Do not disturb the little stream,
Lest this should give offence.

"For the queen of all the fairies
She loves that water bright;
I 've seen her drinking there myself
On many a summer night.

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"But she 's a gracious lady,
And her thou need'st not fear;
Only disturb thou not the stream,
Nor spill the water clear!"

"Now all this I will heed, mother,
Will no word disobey,
And wait upon the grandmother
This livelong summer day!"

Away tripped little Mabel,
With the wheaten cake so fine;
With the new-made pat of butter,
And the little flask of wine.

And long before the sun was hot,
And morning mists had cleared,
Beside the good old grandmother
The willing child appeared.

And all her mother's message
She told with right good-will,
How that the father was away,
And the little child was ill.

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And then she swept the hearth up clean,
And then the table spread;
And next she fed the dog and bird;
And then she made the bed.

"And go now," said the grandmother,
"Ten paces down the dell,
And bring in water for the day;
Thou know'st the lady-well!"

The first time that good Mabel went,
Nothing at all saw she,
Except a bird—a sky-blue bird—
That sate upon a tree.

The next time that good Mabel went,
There sate a lady bright
Beside the well,—a lady small,
All clothed in green and white.

A curtsey low made Mabel,
And then she stooped to fill
Her pitcher at the sparkling spring,
But no drop did she spill

"Thou art a handy maiden,"
The fairy lady said;
"Thou hast not spilled a drop, nor yet
The fair spring troubled!

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"And for this thing which thou host done,
Yet may'st not understand,
I give to thee a better gift
Than houses or than land.

"Thou shalt do well, whate'er thou dost,
As thou hast done this day;
Shalt have the will and power to please,
And shalt be loved alway!"

Thus having said, she passed from sight,
And nought could Mabel see,
But the little bird, the sky-blue bird,
Upon the leafy tree.

—"And now go," said the grandmother,
"And fetch in fagots dry;
All in the neighboring fire-wood,
Beneath the trees they lie."

Away went kind, good Mabel,
Into the fir-wood near,
Where all the ground was dry and brown,
And the grass grew thin and sere.

She did not wander up and down,
Nor yet a live branch pull,
But steadily, of the fallen boughs
She picked her apron full.

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And when the wild-wood brownies
Came sliding to her mind,
She drove them thence, as she was told,
With home-thoughts sweet and kind.

But all that while the brownies
Within the fir-wood still,
They watched her how she picked the wood,
And strove to do no ill.

"And oh, but she is small and neat,"
Said one, "'t were shame to spite
A creature so demure and meek,
A creature harmless quite!"

"Look only," said another,
"At her little gown of blue;
At the kerchief pinned about her head,
And at her little shoe!"

"Oh, but she is a comely child,"
Said a third, "and we will lay
A good-luck-penny in her path,
A boon for her this day,—
Seeing she broke no living wood;
No living thing did affray."

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With that the smallest penny,
Of the finest silver ore,
Upon the dry and slippery path,
Lay Mabel's feet before.

With joy she picked the penny up,
The fairy penny good;
And with her fagots dry and brown
Went wondering from the wood.

"Now she has that," said the brownies,
"Let flax be ever so dear,
Will buy her clothes of the very best,
For many and many a year!"

—"And go, now," said the grandmother,
"Since falling is the dew,
Go down unto the lonesome glen,
And milk the mother-ewe!"

All down into the lonesome glen,
Through copses thick and wild;
Thro' moist, rank grass, by trickling streams,
Went on the willing child.

And when she came to lonesome glen,
She kept beside the burn,

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And neither plucked the strawberry-flower,
Nor broke the lady-fern.

And while she milked the mother-ewe
Within the lonesome glen,
She wished that little Amy
Were strong and well again.

And soon as she had thought this thought,
She heard a coming sound,
As if a thousand fairy-folk
Were gathering all around.

And then she heard a little voice,
Shrill as the midge's wing,
That spake aloud, "a human child
Is here—yet mark this thing!

"The lady-fern is all unbroke,
The strawberry-flower unta'en!
What shall be done for her, who still
From mischief can refrain?"

" Give her a fairy-cake!" said one,
"Grant her a wish!" said three;
The latest wish that she hath wished,"
Said all, "whate'er it be!"

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—Kind Mabel heard the words they spake,
And from the lonesome glen,
Unto the good old grandmother
Went gladly back again.

Thus happened it to Mabel
On that Midsummer-day,
And these three fairy-blessings
She took with her away.

—'Tis good to make all duty sweet,
To be alert and kind;
'Tis good, like little Mabel,
To have a willing mind!

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The Christmas Tree, p. 45.

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THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

ALL of us looked at the picture, and agreed that it was a very pretty one; and from looking at it, we began to talk about Christmas and Christmas trees in general; and the children would not be satisfied, unless I told them about good Mrs. Kinderliebe and her two remarkable Christmases.

"You have all heard about fairy-godmothers," said I; "and you know that they are always very small, and very neat and prim, with little feet and hands, and little neat old-fashioned faces, with grey hair, and lace-bor-

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dered caps. Well, just such a nice little neat old lady was Frau Kinderliebe, or Mrs. Kinderliebe, as we will call her. She lived in the prettiest house in the whole town, and yet she had not all the house to herself, for she had only one floor, and a very learned old Professor lived up stairs above her. He was just as unlike her as he could be. He was big and brown, with a large old dry face, hands, and feet; he did not look very clean either, and there was such a smell of tobacco-smoke about him, that it always made the dear old fairy-godmother cough whenever she talked to him. He was a very good man, however, for all that—and so learned!

The fairy-godmother was a widow; she had been a widow I can't tell you how many years, and the death of her husband had been a very great trouble to her. She managed, however, to be very cheerful and happy—she had been so for a many, many years; and the way she contrived to be so was by always doing good and kind actions. She never seemed to think about herself, except how she could make somebody happy

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or be of use to them. In summer, you saw her going out with a basket in her hand full of cakes, or fruit, or flowers, and they always were for some poor or sick person, to whom they would bring a pleasure. In the winter, you would see her going through the snow and the frost all the same, in a little pair of clogs, and a fur cloak, and little velvet bonnet; and sometimes, Barbele, her old servant, was trudging beside her with a lanthorn, if it was at night, and a large bundle of warm clothing, or something of that sort, which she was carrying to some poor, half-starved creature. And it was wonderful how much sewing and knitting her dear little fingers did, and her fingers were hardly any larger than yours; but then she had such a large heart, it was large enough for an Emperor!

The fairy-godmother loved everything that lived; but most of all did she love little children. She was an old woman you must remember, but that did not matter; she was as merry as a child herself; she knew all sorts of riddles and nursery songs, and such wonderful stories! and, what was better than all, she never was tired of telling them. Be-

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sides this, she knew how to make all kinds of gingerbread, and sugar cakes, and candies, and preserves: and she had almonds, and raisins, and apples, and all sorts of nice things standing in her closet; and she used to say to old Barbele, "Do find some child or other, Barbele, to eat some of our good things, for it is a shame we should eat them all ourselves;" and old Barbele, who had lived so long with her mistress that she was very like her in many things, used to go and fetch in the poor milk-woman's little children, who lived at the next door, or the little chimney sweeper, and then what a feast they had!

The fairy-godmother often used to say how glad she was that as long as the world stood there always would be plenty of children; and whenever she saw them at play, she smiled so pleasantly, and when she saw any in trouble she used to go and wipe away their tears and comfort them; and if she saw them quarrelling she went among them and talked to them so lovingly that you would always be sure to see them kissing and embracing and all good friends again. I cannot tell you how she loved little children

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and how they all loved her; but then you must remember she was just like a fairy-godmother.

"If it were not for the Herr Professor," Mrs. Kinderliebe used to say to Barbele, "I should like us to have some poor orphan child to live with us; I think we could make her happy and good. Yes, if it were not for the Herr Professor, one would have one; but he cannot bear a noise, Barbele, so we must give it up;" and with that the fairy-godmother sighed, and so did old Barbele, who thought of all things she should like to have a pair of little shoes to clean every morning, and to lay a little knife and fork beside the old lady's for dinner. They both thought a great deal about it; but the old Professor, who was so learned and who could not bear a noise, always stood like a bug-bear in the way.

One night, it was just at the beginning of December, the Herr Professor was heard shutting his room door overhead and then coming down stairs, very slowly and very quietly, as he always did; and then he knocked at the fairy-godmother's door, and

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when she told him to come in, he walked in, with his hat in his hand, as he always did when he came to call upon her, for he was very polite. He looked very sad, and scarcely smiled when he spoke to her; and anybody could see that he had a great trouble on his mind—and so he had! Before long, he pulled a letter out of his pocket, which was sealed with black, and he began to tell her that this letter had brought him the news of the death of a friend of his, a very learned man too, who lived in Tübingen, a young man whom the Professor had taught himself; and he and his wife were both dead of a fever, and had left two little daughters. Anybody who had known the Professor before that night would never have expected to see him crying, because he looked so hard and dry; but he shed many tears that evening in the fairy-godmother's room, and he talked so much about the poor little orphans who had no friends, and who now were very poor, that the fairy-godmother cried too.

"I wish some good person would take those poor children," said he, "and bring them up creditably for their good father's

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sake; and with that he took up his hat from the table, and hardly saying good night, he went up stairs again.

The fairy-godmother and Barbele plotted together. It was a very nice plot that they laid; and the next news the old Professor heard was, that Mrs. Kinderliebe was gone off by the eilwagen a long journey, and would not be back till a day or two before Christmas. And now I wish you could have seen old Barbele at work, for several days before her mistress's return; she was so busy gilding walnuts and apples, and making all kinds of cakes and sweatmeats; and such a huge Christmas tree was brought into the house as was never seen before; and there were stags and shepherds all in a garden below it, and hundreds of little candles were fastened to its twigs, and all the cakes and the beautiful things that Barbele had made were hung among them like fairy fruit.

On the morning before Christmas-day, old Barbele went up stairs with her mistress's compliments to the Herr Professor, and "she hoped he would come down in the evening and see her Christmas tree and what the

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Christ-child would send her." The Herr Professor, who was very polite, sent his compliments back, and he would have that honor.

Mrs. Kinderliebe had come back the night before, and she had such a great quantity of luggage with her! The Herr Professor's old servant told him so, but he forgot all about it the next minute.

About six o'clock, he went down stairs, dressed all in his best, with his silver buckles on, and a new wig, and gloves, and black silk stockings, just as if he had been going to visit the Grand Duke. He gave a little company-knock at the fairy-godmother's door, but, before she could answer, old Barbele sprang out of the kitchen and opened it for him; and there was the old lady, all dressed in her best, in her little tiny high-heeled shoes, and grey satin and white lawn apron, and lace handkerchief and cap, looking so beautiful, that the Herr Professor could not help bending his stiff, straight back, and kissing her dear little hand.

The Christmas tree stood in the best par-

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lor, and the next moment the best parlor door opened, and there was the beautiful Christmas tree all blazing, and just under it stood a beautiful little girl, about six years old, with long shining hair falling over her shoulders, and rosy cheeks, and large blue eyes, in a black crape frock, and with a black ribbon round her beautiful golden hair.

"The Christ-child has been here," said the fairy-godmother turning to the old Professor, "and has brought a present for you," and with that, she took the beautiful child by her hand and led her to him; "it is the little daughter of your late friend, the young Professor of Tübingen. She is now my child. She shall live under the same roof with us. We will both of us be kind to her!"

Again the old Professor kissed the dear old lady's hand, but he did not say anything; he only sat down on a chair, and took out his large green pocket-handkerchief, with which he wiped his face many times.

The little child's name was Seraphine, and before long she was sitting on the old Professor's knee and leaning against his

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breast, for she liked the smell of tobacco, because her dear father used to smoke, as all learned men in Germany do. That was the happiest Christmas Eve that the dear fairy-godmother, or the Herr Professor, ever spent.

They talked much about little Seraphine and her dead parents; but this was after she was gone to bed, and about her little sister, who was younger than she, and who was gone to live with a great uncle, a farmer, in Bavaria. The great uncle was a coarse, stern man, who talked loud, and thought it a great vexation for people to die and leave orphan children behind them. Mrs. Kinderliebe could not help crying when she thought what a comfortless home this poor, dear child very likely would have.

Seraphine loved the fairy-godmother very much, and she loved the old Professor too. She used to go up every day and say a lesson to him; he had great pleasure in teaching her; he used to let her look in his big books that were full of pictures. Down stairs she learned music from the fairy godmother, and all sorts of beautiful needle-

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work; she had a work-box, and a silver thimble, and she worked a sampler with blue silk; and all the time she sat at work the fairy-godmother told her stories and beautiful verses, and gave her riddles to guess. In the kitchen, she helped Barbele to make nice cakes and sugar bread, of which she always took some to the Herr Professor.

Poor little Seraphine! She ought to have been very happy, but she was not: everybody was happy but herself. The old Professor seemed to get quite young again; you could even hear him laughing down stairs; the fairy-godmother, whose face had always been so bright, looked now brighter and lovelier than ever, and as to old Barbele, she sang all the time she cleaned the little shoes and made the little bed, which now stood in the dressing-room within the fairy-godmother's chamber.

Seraphine knew that they all loved her and that she must try to be happy; but somehow, whenever she peeped through the palings into the milk-woman's garden, and saw the milk-woman's two little daughters

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playing together, it made her sad, for she thought of her own little sister Angela, and she could not help crying. She would sometimes cry as she sat at work, and once or twice she could not help sobbing on the fairy-godmother's knee, and thus wetting with her tears the old lady's lace handkerchief.

Nobody asked her why she cried so; but neither did anybody scold her for it. She fancied that nobody noticed it; but they did though, and the old lady, who was, you must remember, like a fairy-godmother, she knew *why* she cried, and *why* she was unhappy, just as well as if she had been told.

The old Professor and the fairy-godmother used often now to have a deal of talk together, and whenever they saw Seraphine looking sad, they only nodded at one another.

It now was twelve months since Seraphine's father and mother died, and she had been nearly that time with the fairy-godmother; but for all that she could not help crying when she thought of Angela, and it

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seemed to her as if she thought more and more of her every day. The fairy-godmother and the old Professor seemed to be always talking together; and one day, a very short time before Christmas, Seraphine was told that she would do no more lessons up stairs at present, for that the Professor had set out on a journey, and would not be back till the day before Christmas.

Barbele and the Professor's old servant had now such a deal of work to do; but as it was always up stairs in the Professor's kitchen, Seraphine was never invited there; she sat down stairs with the fairy-godmother, hemming a blue silk handkerchief, which was to be given to the Herr Professor at Christmas.

The fairy-godmother told Seraphine, that the Professor had sent his compliments down stairs, and invited *them* to go up that evening; for this was the morning before Christmas-day, and to see *his* Christmas tree and the presents which the Christ-child would bring. Seraphine and her fairy-godmother sent up their presents for the Profes-

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sor by Barbele to his servant, for her to give the Christ-child.

The evening came! Seraphine was dressed in a white frock, with blue shoes on, and a broad-blue sash; and her beautiful hair, which the fairy-godmother combed and brushed herself, fell over her shoulders, just like an angel's in a picture. When she was dressed, her fairy-godmother looked into her face with such a deal of love in her eyes, and kissed her. Seraphine could not help crying; she clung to the dear old lady and sobbed so; for her heart was very full, and she had been trying not to cry all day, and now she had once begun, she felt as if she never could leave off. She was thinking so much about Angela, and wondering what sort of a Christmas she would keep with the stern, great uncle in Bavaria.

The fairy-godmother told her she must not cry, and she gave her rose-water to wash her face in, and told her to be quick, for the Herr Professor himself had come down stairs to conduct them up, because he was so impatient at them being so long.

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Up stairs they went;—the fairy-godmother in her grey satin, and little high-heeled shoes, and her lace cap and handkerchief, leaning on the Professor's arm, and little Seraphine following, and Barbele following her with a lamp in her hand, for she too was going up stairs; and the Professor's servant was standing at the top with another lamp in her hand, so that they had plenty of light.

The door at the top of the stairs opened at once into the Professor's best parlor. The door swung open; the Christmas tree blazed out, like a tree of beautiful fire; and just below it stood Seraphine's little sister Angela. The Herr Professor had been into Bavaria and fetched her; she was his present to Seraphine; they were not going to be parted again.

Seraphine and Angela sprang into each other's arms: they laughed and cried together.

That was the happiest Christmas that the Professor and the fairy-godmother ever spent. And no wonder!

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A DREAM.

HOAR with lapse of ages seemed
The silent land toward which I drew;
And yet within myself I deemed
The dwellers in that land were few.
A strong conviction seemed to rest
Upon my heart that I was then
In the sole portion of the earth,
Which since creation's perfect birth,
Had held the sons of men;
And I was on a marvelling quest
Of that small colony of the blest.

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How lone, how silent! not a sound
In earth or air, from wind or flood;
But o'er the bare and barren ground
Brooded an endless solitude.
It was an awful thing to tread
O'er grey and parched and mighty plains,
Where never living thing was seen,
Where the live heart had never been:
The blood chilled in my veins,—
Yet still I felt in spirit led
Across that wilderness of dread.

But lo! that deadness of the world,
Which seemed of an eternal power,
Like a light vapor was unfurled,
And I walked over fern and flower;
Hills, robed in light celestial blue,
Bounded that amplitude of plain;
And round me there were lofty trees,
Yet moveless, soundless to the breeze;
And not a wild bird's strain,
Nor cry of beast, could still undo
The spell which silence o'er me threw.

But man was there. Not far aside
One I beheld who strongly toiled;
He seemed a youth of solemn pride,
Of noble from, but dimmed and soiled

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With rural labor and with care,
And he clove wood for sacrifice.
I listened for his sounding stroke,
There was no sound; and now the smoke
Did from the pile arise;
And he gazed on it with an air
Less marked by pleasure than despair.

But then a lovelier vision sprung
Before me; and between the tall
And shadowy trees, a low cloud hung,
So low, it scarcely hung at all;
'Twas like no cloud which sails the sky;
Around it all was clearly seen;
It mixed not with the ambient air;
Rolled on itself compact and fair,
It rested on the scene,
More still and motionless than lie
The clouds of summer in the sky.

Beside it stood a hoary seer,
And through my heart a whisper ran,
"God, or his angel shrouded here,
Holds converse with this holy man."
Dark was that cloudy dwelling-place;
No glory on it seemed to dwell;
Yet still on every thing around,

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On tree, on shrub, and heathy ground,
A streaming radiance fell;
And on that patriarch's awful face
Glowed with intense, unearthly grace.

Propped on his staff, in peace he stood,
Sandaled, and girdled in his vest,
And his full beard in silver flowed
Far down his pure and quiet breast;
His eye was on the cloud, as one
Who listens to momentous things,
And seems with reverence to hear,
Yet with more confidence than fear,
What some great herald brings.

But as I gazed, a little boat,
Swift, without rudder, oars, or sail,
Down through the ambient air afloat,
Bore onward one who seemed to hail
The patriarch,—and he turned his head;
He turned and saw a smiling boy,
Smiling in beauty and in youth,
With eyes in which eternal truth
Lay with eternal joy.
He touched that old man's snowy head,
And boat, youth, cloud, and patriarch fled!

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A multitude of dreams have passed
  Since this, and perished as they came;
But in my mind imprinted fast
  This lives, and still remains the same.
The beauty of that gliding car;
    The mystery of the cloud and sage;
Those plains in arid drought so stern;
That solemn hush that seemed etern;—
    In memory's living page,
Still stand in light, more real far
Than thousands of our day-dreams are!

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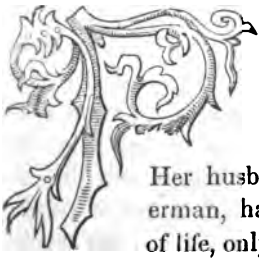
THE

PICTURE OF THE VIRGIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE AUGUSTUS.



POOR THEODORA lived in a lonesome cottage in a wood, not far distant from the banks of the Danube. Her husband, who was a fisherman, had died, in the bloom of life, only a short time before. The one comfort which she had in her early widowhood was her only son, a kind, handsome boy, of about five years old, who was called Augustus. That which she considered of the greatest importance, was the teaching him to be good and pious; and her unceasing care was to preserve for him the paternal cottage, and the right of fishing.

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It is true that she had been obliged for the present to give up the fishing; and the fishing tackle of her late husband, as it hung useless on the wall, and his fishing-boat, which lay turned upside down near the cottage, were painful sights to her. In the meantime she supported herself and her son by making fishing-nets, in which she was very skilful; and often at midnight, when little Augustus had been long asleep, she worked unweariedly for him. Nor had the little fellow, on his part, any other thought than how to give his mother pleasure. The good mother wept on every occasion which reminded her of her late husband; and Augustus, when he saw this, did all that lay in his childish power to comfort her. A few days after the death of her beloved husband, her brother, who was a fisherman in the next village, came and brought her a fish as a present. Theodora looked at the beautiful carp, and began to weep: "Ah!" said she; "I did not think that I should ever have had again such a fine fish in my cottage."

"Do not cry, mother!" said little Augus-

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tus; "when I am a great man, I will catch you fish enough."

The sorrowful mother smiled again, and said, "Yes, Augustus, I hope that you will some day be the comfort of my age. Be only as good and upright a man as your father, and I shall then be the happiest of mothers."

Once, upon a fine autumn day, Theodora, from early morning, was busied upon a large fishing-net, which she wished to finish that day. In the meantime the boy collected, in the surrounding wood, beech-nuts, from which his mother wanted to press the oil, in order that she might have a cheap light for her netting in the long winter evenings. Little Augustus rejoiced, above all things, whenever he could bring to his mother his oblong, deep hand-basket heaped up with beech-nuts. His mother praised him always when he did so, in order to animate him to industry, and to accustom him to a life of labor. It was now getting towards noon, and the little fellow was hungry and weary; at length the mid-day bell sounded in the next village, and his mother called

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him to dinner. She had set out the little dinner, which consisted of a dishful of milk, into which bread had been broken, under the beautiful beech-tree that stood not far from the cottage, in an open green space of the wood.

After the bread and milk had been eaten, and the dish was empty, the mother said to the boy, "Now lie down in the shade of the tree and sleep a little: I will go on with my work, and will come again at the right time and wake you. Now, sleep well!" cried she, as she looked round her once again, and then went with the empty dish into the cottage.

In a little while she returned and looked. The little boy lay sleeping on the green turf: his curly head rested on one arm, whilst the other was thrown round his tidy little basket. He smiled in sleep, and his countenance and his rosy cheek were sweetly shaded by the wavering beech-leaves.

She hastened back again to her work, and netted on industriously till the net was finished. The hours passed, over her work, like so many minutes. She went now to

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waken little Augustus, but she found him no longer under the beech-tree.

"The industrious child is again at his work with his little basket," said she joyfully. Ah! she foreboded not what a grief awaited her.

She went back again, and spread out the net upon the green turf. She found here and there a place in it which required mending; and so a considerable time passed. But as the boy still did not come back with his basket, she began to be uneasy about him. She sought for him through the whole wood, which was about three miles long, and a mile and a half broad, but she found him nowhere. She shouted a hundred times, "Augustus!—Augustus!" but she received no answer.

She was very much frightened: she felt the most extreme anxiety. "If he should," said she, "have forgotten the warning which I have often so earnestly repeated, and have ventured down to the water!" She trembled at the very thought, and ran down to the river: but neither could she perceive anything of him there. She then went weeping

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and lamenting to the village. A crowd of people collected round the mourning mother: all had compassion on her, especially her brother: not one of them, however, knew anything of the boy. In the meantime, the whole village assembled, determined, with one mind, to seek the child. Some betook themselves to the wood, others to the surrounding country, and others again to the river, to look for him. Night approached, and nowhere had anybody discovered the least trace of him.

"If he be drowned in the Danube," said one of the fishermen of the village, "we shall certainly find the body. We know the course of the water well: below there, on the gravel, where the great willow-tree stands, it will certainly cast him up again."

The mother shuddered at these words, and went back to her cottage full of distress, and watched and wept there solitarily through the night. As soon as the light of morning showed itself, she hastened down to the river, to find perhaps, there, the body of her beloved child. Yes, for many days and many weeks went she, every

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morning and evening, with terrified heart, and wandered lamenting up and down the stream. The fishermen who, in the early dawn, were on the river at their daily work, or were returning from it late in the evening, saw her often wandering thus, and often, too, raising her hands to heaven. and were all of them heartily sorry for her.

So passed on a long time. The body never came to view: the mother neither saw nor heard anything more of the child. She was always unspeakably cast down. "In so short a time," said she, "to lose such a good husband and such a beloved child—ah, that is hard! If I did not think that the Almighty had permitted it thus to be, I should be in despair!" Often most bitterly did she reproach herself: "I ought to have taken better care of the boy," cried she, weeping and wringing her hands. "Oh, you mothers," said she to the wives of the village, who wished to console her, "take example by me, and be more watchful."

Poor Theodora! by degrees her grief made her as pale as a corpse, and wore her away till she was as thin as a shadow. As she

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went to church on Sunday, in her black mourning dress, some weeks after the loss of the child, the people said one to another, "Poor Dora! she will soon follow, of a certainty, her husband and her child to the grave!"

The clergyman of the village, a venerable old man, who took the liveliest interest in the fate of his parishioners, had already visited her, and comforted her, several times at her cottage. But when, on this day, he saw her pale, deeply-troubled face, he was greatly distressed. When the service was ended, he sent for her. When she entered his room, the good old man, whose snow-white hair was covered with a black velvet cap, was sitting at his desk, and was writing something in the parish book. He greeted her kindly, and said: "Wait a little while, I shall be ready in a moment."

Whilst she waited, Theodora observed a small picture that hung on the wall, in a round, beautiful, gilt frame. She was very much affected by it, and the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"Now," said the pastor, as he flirted the

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ink from his pen, and raised himself, "does the picture please you?"

"Ah, yes," replied Theodora, "it is very sweet. I cannot help weeping as I look at it."

"Do you know whom it represents?" asked the Pastor.

"Oh yes, very well," said she; "it is a picture of the Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord. I never saw the sorrowful mother, as she weeps for the death of her son, so beautifully painted."

"Thus," said the Pastor, "is she the most beautiful and the most consolatory example for you: observe, therefore, her image carefully. See, the sword in her breast is a symbol, according to Simeon's prophecying, of the deep pain which should, as it were, pierce through her heart for the bloody death of her divine son. Her eyes, full of tears, as well as her clasped hands, which are also raised to heaven, show her devotion and her confidence in God. The golden beams, however, which gleam around her head, signify her glorification in heaven, to which she will at length attain, through her patience in

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suffering, and her submission to the Divine will. Good Theodora," continued he, "you have lost much—your husband and your child: a two-edged sword has pierced your heart: but look up, like Mary, to heaven!—submit yourself to God's will!—trust in Him!—pray for comfort and for strength from above! You know that Mary, confiding in God, and strengthened by his mercy, stood erect below the cross. The faith in which she spoke, to the joyful communication of the angel—'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord, do to me according to thy will!'—filled her heart also in the hour of suffering, and permitted it not to sink. It is only the assurance that God does all aright, that that which He permits is the very best which can support you from being overwhelmed by your affliction: forget not, therefore, the great and beautiful object of all our sufferings. The sufferings of time bear no comparison to the glory which shall be revealed to us. Through suffering is virtue perfected: the sufferings of time lead to everlasting joy. Even Christ himself attained to his glory through suffering. On this way, Mary fol-

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lowed Him: nor is there for us any other way to Heaven."

Theodora listened to him greatly affected, and found great satisfaction in the beautiful picture. She could not sufficiently contemplate it. "I will follow," said she, "the example of the afflicted mother: I will look up to Heaven, pray, believe, and say from my very heart, as she did, 'Lord, thy will be done!'"

"Good!" said the Pastor; "that is right; that pleases me."

According to the opinion of that good man, nothing was too costly for the consolation of a sorrowing spirit. He took the beautiful picture from the wall, gave it to the poor fisherwoman, and said: "In order that you may not forrget your beautiful resolution, and be able to adhere to it, take this picture home with you: I give it to you. When your heart begins afresh to bleed, and it feels as if a two-edged sword were within it, then cast your glance upon the picture, renew your resolution, and the wound will, with God's help, heal by degrees, and above,

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in Heaven, will a crown of glory also await you."

Theodora followed the advice of the good Pastor; and her grief became much milder: but still whenever she passed the tree under which she had last seen her boy, there always went a pang through her heart. On this the thought came into her mind to make a hollow in the tree, and to place within it the beautiful picture. "The tree," said she, "causes me ever new sorrow; but then I should also here ever find new consolation. Ah!" sighed she, "other mothers place, for their dead children, a little memorial in the churchyard; the tree may thus become the memorial of my dear Augustus."

She mentioned her idea to the good old Pastor, and he had nothing against it. "So that it brings you consolation, do it, well and good."

She cut, therefore, with a deal of trouble, a round hollow, about the size of a window-pane, in the bark of the tree, placed the picture within it, and, when she now passed the tree, she looked upon that beautiful picture, and said: "I also will be a servant

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of the Lord, like Mary; to me also it happened according to His will!" and by degrees her heart became less sorrowful.

CHAPTER II.

MR. WAHL.

IN the meantime, whilst the afflicted mother wept her beloved Augustus as dead, the little five-years-old boy had made a journey of more than three hundred miles; had arrived in the imperial city of Vienna; lived there, gay and full of health, in a magnificent house that resembled a palace; was as beautifully and richly dressed as if he were of noble birth; and, which was more than all this, he was educated in the most careful manner, and was instructed by the very best teachers in all that was good and useful.

This extraordinary change had been brought about in a very simple manner. After Augustus had awoke, under the beech, and had rubbed his eyes, he set off immediately into the wood, to seek again for beech-

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nuts, and had soon nearly half-filled his little basket. At length he came to where there were no longer any beech-trees, and went on and on till at last he came out of the wood on the side bordering the river. A large boat lay on the shore there. The boat had only lain-to here to wait for some passengers that it had to take up. The other passengers, who were in part very rich people, and in part families of the middle class, had all come on land. The elder persons walked up and down the green and meadow-like banks for a little exercise, and the children amused themselves by looking for bright-colored pebbles among the gravel on the shore. Presently the children saw the little Augustus, and then came up to him and peeped into his little willow-basket, to see what he had in it. The pretty brown beech-nuts, with which they were unacquainted, delighted them.

"They are very queer nuts!" said the little Antonia, a lovely child, somewhat younger than Augustus, and who was dressed as prettily as a lady: "such little three-cornered chestnuts I never saw before!"

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"Nay," said Augustus, who had never heard of chestnuts, "they are not such odd things as you say; they are beech-nuts, and one can eat them." He divided whole handfuls among the children, and they made a great rejoicing. It gave the good little Augustus the greatest pleasure to find such a many merry children all together; such a happiness as this was very rare, for it was not often that he saw even a child from the village. He joined himself to the children, and they gave to him of all that they had, pears and plums.

Augustus was now very curious to see the boat nearer: it was the first large boat that he had seen near. The floating house upon it, a great deal larger than his cottage, appeared to him very wonderful. The children took him with them into the boat. Antonia led him into the papered room, which was appointed for the use of the higher class of passengers.

"Eh!" cried Augustus, in astonishment, "there is in this house a prettier parlor than we have at home!"

Antonia and his other new play-fellows

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showed him now their toys. Augustus was enraptured by the sight of all these splendors, and thought no more about going home. In the meantime the boat, without the boy being the least aware of it, put from the land, and floated majestically down the river.

Nobody in the boat had paid any particular attention to Augustus. The passengers who had been longest in the boat, supposed that he belonged to some of the new-comers; and the new-comers imagined that he belonged to those already there. It was only when the evening approached, and the poor child began to cry aloud, and ask for his mother, that people discovered that a strange child was on board. They were not a little astonished, and no small disturbance arose in the boat. Many lamented, and pitied both mother and child; others laughed at the unbidden little travelling companion: the boatmen scolded, and threatened to throw the boy in the water.

At that moment the master of the boat came up and examined him. "Tell me

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now, little fellow," began the grave, fat man, "from what city or village came you?"

"I am from no city, and from no village," said Augustus.

"That is strange," said the master; "yet you must have a home somewhere."

"My home," replied he, "stands in the wood, not far from the village."

"Good, now," said the master; "what is the name of the village."

"Ha!" said Augustus; "what should it be called but the village? My mother never called it anything else. She used to say, Now they ring the bell in the village for dinner, or, to-morrow you shall go with me into the village to buy bread."

"What, then, is the name of your parents?" asked the master.

"My father," answered the boy, "is dead, and my mother is called the fisher-wife, Dora."

"Then," said the master, "she is named Theodora; but what is her surname?"

"She has no other name but Dora," said the little one; "she has often said to people, that they need not call her anything else."

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The master saw very well, that from an inexperienced child, who had no notion even of a surname, but little information would be obtained. He grew very angry, and said: "I wish that the cuckoo had brought you anywhere rather than into my boat."

The good little one, whose eyes were full of tears, answered, quite simply, and without passion, "The cuckoo has not brought me here: I have never once seen him, but in spring I have often heard him."

Everybody in the boat laughed, but the master was in great perplexity. Here, unfortunately, the Danube flowed through an uninhabited woody region, and far and wide no open space could be seen. In a while, however, as the sun was about setting, they discerned a distant church tower. "I will leave the child in that village," said the master, "that the people there may take it back to its mother; and there, since we cannot go much further to-night, will we sleep."

But Mr. Wahl, the father of Antonia, would not consent to this. He was a rich merchant, who was taking several chests full of gold and treasure with him, for he,

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like the rest of the boat's company, were fleeing before the enemy, it being during the time of the Thirty Years' War which laid waste Germany.

"I wish with all my heart," said Mr. Wahl, "that the distressed mother could, without delay, have her dear child back with her. But at this moment it cannot be done! The enemy is advancing, and is approaching the Danube; a delay of a few hours might endanger our falling into the hands of the enemy, and losing all that we possess. In Heaven's name proceed."

Mr. Wahl, who had great cause for anxiety, insisted also that the boat should travel through the whole night, considering that it was the time of full moon. They said that this was against their custom: but as he promised a great sum of money both to the master and the boatmen, they consented at last, and proceeded in the clear bright moonlight onward, through the whole night.

At sunrise, they came to a little village that lay close to the shore. The master now endeavored to induce the peasants to

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receive the child, begging them to inquire out the village, and the mother in the district whence he came, and thus to do a deed of mercy both to mother and child. But the peasants said: "Who knows to whom the boy belongs? It may very easily happen that we shall never get rid of him, and shall have to bring him up amongst us. In these hard times, poor folks have more than enough to do; we will not take any new burden on ourselves."

Soon after this they saw another village on the other side of the river, which lay not far from the shore, and looked very large and respectable. The master determined here to take the child only to the village authorities or to the clergyman, and ordered them accordingly to put to land. But all at once Mr. Wahl exclaimed, "Hark! Do you not hear the thunder of cannon? The enemy is near us; we must not waste a moment. Forwards! forwards with the ship!"

The master, who feared that in the end the child might be left on his hands, opposed Mr. Wahl, and soon a violent contention arose between them. At this moment, Mrs.

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Wahl, who was a kind and benevolent lady, stepped between them, and said, in her own peculiar friendly manner, softly to her husband, "We will take the handsome, affectionate boy to ourselves: thus we can do a good work, and put an end to all dispute."

This proposal pleased Mr. Wahl very well, and he immediately said aloud, "Proceed! I will adopt the child, and will provide for him!"

The master was satisfied with this, and everybody in the boat praised the noble-hearted determination of Mr. Wahl.

The boat arrived happily in Vienna. Mr. Wahl bought there a handsome large house, and began again his business as a merchant. He engaged very excellent instructors for his only daughter Antonia, and permitted Augustus to take part in her lessons. The little fellow, however ignorant he might be, showed uncommon abilities, and made, in a short time, such progress in his studies as amazed every one. Besides this, he was so discreet and obedient, so good-tempered and amiable, and of so pious a heart, that Mr. and Mrs. Wahl loved him as if he had been their own

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child. The sentiment of love of God, the seeds of which his mother had at first implanted in him, became more and more living and strong in his heart.

Mr. Wahl observed, with pleasure, that Augustus showed great inclination for trade. He gave him every opportunity for acquiring all the knowledge necessary for a merchant, and then took him into his counting-house. Augustus was soon here of the greatest service: and before he had reached his twentieth year, he was quite capable of conducting, in the best manner, the most important affairs of his foster-father. Mr. Wahl extended his business still more and more. He undertook great commissions for the army, and, although he never allowed himself any unlawful gains, he became thus immensely rich. He saw clearly how much of all this he owed, as well to the skill as to the unwearied industry and inviolable honesty of his adopted son, and was determined to reward him.

The little Antonia was, in the meantime, grown up to be an amiable young lady; she was spotless in heart and mind; a real image of innocence and beauty; besides which

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she was greatly attached to her youthful companion. To Augustus, therefore, Mr. Wahl gave Antonia as a wife, and nothing in this world could be happier than they two.

When the war was ended the emperor, to whom Mr. Wahl and his son-in-law had done great service, raised them to the rank of nobles. Good Mr. and Mrs. Wahl, however, could only enjoy for a few years this long-desired peace. They were beloved tenderly both by Augustus and Antonia, and affectionately cherished to the end of their days. They died, the one soon after the other, in the comfortable hope of seeing again these beloved children, in that blessed abode where reigns eternal peace.

Augustus, now Baron von Wahlheim, gave up his commercial concerns, and determined to purchase, either in Bavaria, or in Swabia, one of those noble estates which had been devastated by the war, and which now were to be had at very low prices. Several were offered to him. He made a journey, therefore, saw them, and selected the beautiful estate of Newchurch, which particularly pleased him. He immediately prepared for

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the rebuilding of its fine but desolated castle, and then returned to Vienna to fetch his wife and his two children.

When Antonia came with her husband to their new possessions, and saw everywhere traces of the misery which the war had occasioned, she was very sorrowful. Many houses of the village were nothing more than heaps of rubbish; others threatened to fall to pieces; and whole districts lay uncultivated.

"Ah! the poor, poer people!" said Antonia, with tears in her eyes, "we must help them!"

Augustus rejoiced that his wife thought as he did, and he devoted a large portion of his wealth to the helping his dependants out of their great poverty. He gave timber and money for building; he purchased corn for seed and cattle, and divided them as free gifts among his people. The peasants could not sufficiently praise their new lord, and came to thank him.

"God has made me from a poor boy into a rich man," said he, "and has blessed me wonderfully in all things. It would be in-

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gratitude if I did not impart of this blessing to others. I rejoice to be able to contribute anything to your happiness: there is no higher happiness than that of making others happy."

CHAPTER III.

THE WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.

WHILST Augustus von Wahlheim had become a rich and fine gentleman, his mother, the good Theodora, had experienced much hard fate, and had led a life of great poverty; yet, at the same time, from her dependence on God, a life of great contentment.

Soon after the time in which she lost her child, the war advanced into the country of the Danube, where she lived, and the enemy's troops took at once possession of the woods. Theodora lost her solitary cottage, and fled into the village to her brother, who possessed the paternal house: but here also was there no lasting abode for her. The

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village, during a skirmish, was almost reduced to ashes, and the greater part of the inhabitants dispersed themselves. The house of Theodora's brother was burnt to the ground; but he endeavored to maintain himself as a fisherman, and Theodora fled to her sister, who lived about thirty miles off. The sister received her very kindly: she had many children, and Theodora helped her to bring them up. The two sisters lived together in peace and unity, and lightened to each other the sufferings which the war had brought upon them both. After some years she received a letter from her brother, written from the old home. He wrote to her, that his wife was dead, that his two daughters, during the war, had married away from him, and that he wished that his sister should return to him, and take charge of his house. Theodora returned therefore again to her old home.

Scarcely had she arrived in the village when she betook herself to the wood, and sought for the beech-tree in which she had placed the beautiful picture, and which she had, in her sudden flight, forgotten to take

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with her. But, good heavens! how everything was changed here! The path which had led to her cottage was no longer to be found: it was lost in high grass and thick underwood. Where hitherto only low bushes had grown, now tall trees had raised themselves, with widely-spreading branches: on the contrary, many large old trees, which Theodora had well known, had disappeared. There had not been for long one single trace of her poor wooden cottage; even the place upon which it had once stood she could no longer find with certainty: all around was a thick impenetrable wood. Theodora was at a deal of trouble, but in vain, to find the tree under which she had wept so much. She passed through thorns and underwood, and carefully noticed every beech-tree.—"If I can no longer find that beautiful picture," thought she, "still the empty hollow in the tree would make known to me where once the picture had been."

"Do not give yourself such labor in vain, good mother," said an old man, who was gathering fire-wood there. "I think that the tree is no longer standing. As it is with us

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on our return to the village, so is it in the wood;—men that we left here as children are grown up; those who then were grown up are now old people; and the old people of those days are now lying in their graves. The young growth presses upon the old trees: all things in this world soon pass away: men still quicker than trees. We have here no abiding place; therefore will we strive after that which is above, and which endures for ever."

The old man went on his way, and Theodora gave up all hope of ever again finding the tree.

Baron von Wahlheim lived many miles from here; but both that wood, and the village in which Theodora lived, belonged to the territory which he had purchased. One day he came into this very wood, in order to distribute among the people of the village fire-wood for the winter. The wood had grown quite wild, and would be greatly benefitted by the felling of a deal of timber. He wished, however, to see with his own eyes that every needy person obtained his proper share. He sent, therefore, for all household-

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ers, and soon distributed to this one and to that one a tree. Theodora came in the place of her brother. According to his arrangement, the tree against which Baron von Wahlheim stood as she came up, was apportioned to her brother. She stepped up, therefore, and said, "That the gracious gentleman would please to pardon her brother not coming himself, as he was ill, and could not leave his bed."

Baron von Wahlheim never thought that that aged, meanly-dressed woman, was his mother; and just as little did she think that the gracious gentleman who stood before her, handsome and blooming as life itself, in a fine blue dress, and with a diamond ring on his finger, was her son. He felt, without knowing her, the most heartfelt compassion for her, and gave her the tree.

The forest-master made some demur. "It is," said he, "a pity to give away that large handsome beech-tree. Aspens and birches are good enough for poor people. The beech-wood ought to be saved for the family use of the gracious Baron himself."

Baron von Wahlheim looked gravely at the forest-master, and said, "It is not only the

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bad, and that which we reject, which we should give to the poor, but of the best also; and especially in a time of need. The tree therefore belongs to the sister of the sick man, and, more than this, it shall be felled and cut into fire-wood at my cost, and shall be delivered also at the door of the poor people. Lay hand, then, to it instantly, you wood-cutters, before you cleave my wood."

He hastened onward in order to spare her thanks. Theodora looked after him, with tears in her eyes, and said, "God bless the good gentleman!" and then went her way.

And thus mother and son, who had seen each other in this wood, for the last time, upwards of twenty years ago, and who this moment had again met here without recognizing each other, might very well again, and perhaps for ever, have become separated from each other, if the holy providence of God had not ordered it better.

Two wood-cutters immediately laid the axe to the tree: it fell with a great crash to the earth; and the men cried out in amazement, "A miracle!—a real miracle!" The tree trunk had broken in the fall, a piece of

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the bark started off, and the men discovered at once that picture for which Theodora had so long sought in vain. The colors of the lovely picture were as perfectly fresh and lively as ever; and the frame, the gold of which had been tried in the fire, shimmered in the light of the sun, as if the picture had been surrounded with bright rays. The wood-cutters were young men, and knew nothing of the history of the picture. "It goes beyond our understanding," said they, "how that beautiful picture of the Virgin should ever get into the tree! There is something unheard of in it; it is an evident miracle!"

On the disturbance which the men made, Baron von Wahlheim, who was scarcely two hundred paces distant, came up. He took the picture in his hand and examined it. "Of a truth," said he, "it is very beautiful,—I might almost say a master-piece. The pale, melancholy countenance, and moving glance cast upwards to heaven, are incomparably beautiful; the red dress, and folds of the dark blue mantle are also excellently painted. Still it is very easy to imagine how it came

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into the tree. Some pious person has made a hollow in the tree-trunk, and has placed it there. The bark, by degrees, as is usual with these trees, has again closed over it, and thus the picture has become enclosed in the tree."

Suddenly, however, Baron von Wahlheim grew pale, and his hand which held the picture trembled. "Ah!" said he, "this is most extraordinary!" He was obliged to seat himself on the trunk of the fallen tree, for he had turned to the back of the picture, and had read these words, "*In the year of our Lord* 1632, *on the* 10*th of October, I saw here, under this tree, my only son Augustus, aged five years and three months, for the last time. God be with him wherever he be, and comfort, as he comforted Mary under the Cross, me, the heart-broken mother, Theodora Sommer.*"

The thought went through him like lightning. "I was this lost child! Name, year, and day agree exactly! It was my mother who placed this picture here!"

As he was thus thinking to himself, his mother came by. She had been waiting in

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in the wood for a neighbor, with whom she was to return to the village, and the tidings of the picture which had just been found, filled her with astonishment.

"Ah, gracious sir," said she, "that picture is mine. I pray you give it me. See my name stands to it; the late pastor wrote it there. At my request also did he write the other words. Ah," said she, weeping, as she examined the fallen tree, "this then is the tree under which my child slept for the last time so sweetly and calmly, before he was taken from me! How often have I gone, since I returned here, past this tree without recognizing it! Oh, my Augustus—thus, then, I see the place once more, where my eyes beheld thee for the last time! Ah! thee, thee I shall see no more in this life. It is to me as if I stood upon thy grave!" She could say no more for weeping.

Baron von Wahlheim was almost beside himself to see his own mother in that poor woman. His heart burned within him, and he was ready to spring up and clasp her in his arms, with the exclamation, "My mother!" but he restrained himself, for it oc-

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curred to him that the sudden joy might cause her death. He took her kindly by the hand, wiped away her tears with his white handkerchief, spoke comfortably to her, and by little and little, told her that he knew her son yet lived, and that certainly she would see him again. After these and such-like assurances, at length he said, "I am your lost son!" "Thou!" exclaimed his mother, and sank on his breast without being able to say one more word. Locked in each other's arms, they remained a long time silent. All those who stood around wept.

"Dearest mother," said Baron von Wahlheim, at length, "God has fulfilled your wishes. He was ever with me, and has richly blessed me. You also has he comforted as he comforted Mary; he has given to you again your son as it were from the dead, and has placed him living before your eyes. He separated us, the one from the other, under this tree, and has brought us again together, even on the same spot. He has safely preserved the picture in the tree, and has brought it again to light at the right moment for us to recognize each other. He has thus re-

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vealed himself to us as the Power who does all things for the best."

"Yes," said the mother, "he has done so, the dear, good God! He has taken thee from me because I, perhaps, from a too tender love, might not have brought thee up well. He has given thee to me again, to be my helper in need—nay, for the whole country around, to be a comforting and sustaining angel. All that He does is wisdom and love. Praised be His name!"

All those who stood around joined with her, and praised God aloud.

Baron von Wahlheim now bade the forest-master say to the brother of Theodora, that she would return home next morning, and then bring her son with her; and she engaged her good neighbor to attend, in the meantime, upon her sick brother. After this, Baron von Wahlheim ordered his coach to come, helped his mother into it, placed himself near her, and drove with her back to his castle. Here new joy awaited the good woman. She was half ashamed of appearing in her mean dress before her daughter-in-law, the Baroness: but Antonia was too noble to think of

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this; she met her with open arms, saluted her in the kindest manner, and esteemed herself happy in knowing the mother of her dear husband. Theodora wept for joy; but when, beyond this, her two grandchildren, Ferdinand and Marie, were brought to her, both loving and lovely, amiable and good as angels, her joy became perfect rapture.

"Inexpressible," said she, "was my sorrow, but my joy is now yet still greater. I can do nothing but weep, praise and thank God!"

On the following day, Baron von Wahlheim went, with his mother in his coach, to visit her sick brother. Theodora remained with her brother till he recovered, and then removed to the castle, for so her son and his wife desired. They provided also for her brother in the most kind manner, for they were too wise and too good to be ashamed of any poor relation.

More than this, they invited, on a certain day, parents, children, and grandchildren, to a great festival, giving to Theodora the place of honor. The good people were quite enchanted, and sate with tears of joy in their eyes.

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The Baron and his wife took this opportunity of inquiring exactly into all their circumstances, and afterwards gave such assistance to each as would be most useful and advantageous to them.

Baron von Wahlheim hung up the little picture in the family parlor: "It shall," said he, "be a perpetual incitement to confidence in, and gratitude to, God. The inexpressibly beautiful glance which Mary casts up to heaven, shall lead ours there; for what, in all dangers and sufferings of this life, can sustain us—can preserve us from sin, and awaken us to good, more than a pious glance upwards to heaven?"

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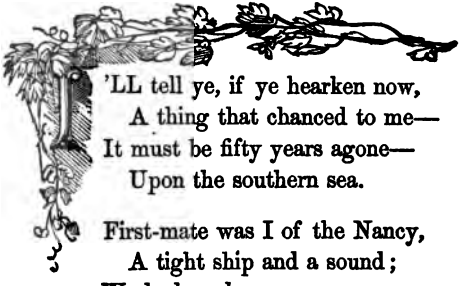
THE BOY OF THE SOUTHERN ISLE,

AN OLD SHAMAN'S STORY.



'LL tell ye, if ye hearken now,
A thing that chanced to me—
It must be fifty years agone—
Upon the southern sea.

First-mate was I of the Nancy,
A tight ship and a sound;
We had made a prosperous voyage,
And then were homeward bound.

We were sailing on the Tropic seas,
Before the trade-wind's power;
Day after day, without delay,
Full thirteen knots an hour.

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The sea was as a glassy lake,
By a steady gale impressed;
There was nought for any man to do
But just what liked him best.

And yet the calm was wearisome;
The dull days idly sped;
And sometimes on a flute I played,
Or else a book I read.

And dallying thus one afternoon,
I stood upon the deck;
When far off, to the leeward,
I saw a faintish speck.

Whether 'twas rock, or fish, or cloud,
At first I did not know;
So I called unto a seaman,
That he might look also.

And as it neared, I saw for sure
That it must be a boat;
But my fellow swore it was not so,
But a large bamboo afloat.

We called a third unto us then,
That he the sight might see;
Then came a fourth, a fifth, a sixth,
But no two could agree.

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"Nay, 't is a little boat," I said,
"And it roweth with an oar!"
But none of them could see it so,
All differing as before.

"It cometh on; I see it plain;
It is a boat!" I cried,
"A little boat o'erlaid with pearl,
And a little child to guide!"

And sure enough, a boat it was,
And worked with an oar;
But such a boat as 't was, no man
Had ever seen before.

Within it sate a little child,
The fairest e'er was seen;
His robes were like the amethyst,
His mantle of sea-green.

No covering wore he on his head,
And the hair that on it grew
Showered down in thick and wavy locks,
Of the sunniest golden hue.

The rudest man on board our ship
Blest God that sight to see;
For me I could do nought but weep,
Such power had it on me.

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There sat he in his pretty boat
  Like an angel from the sky
Regarding us in our great ship,
  With wonder in his eye.

The little oar slid from his hand;
  His sweet lips were apart;
Within my soul I felt his joy
  His wonder in my heart.

And as we tokened him to come,
  His little boat he neared,
And smiled at all our friendly words,
  Nor seemed the least afeared.

"Come hither a-board!" the captain said;
  And without fear of ill,
He sprang into the lordly ship,
  With frank and free good will.

He was no son of the merman;
  No syren full of guile;
But a creature like the cherubim,
  From some unknown-of isle.

And strange to tell, his pleasant speech
  Was English, every word;
And yet such English, sweet and pure,
  As his I never heard.

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There were three, he said, who dwelt with him
Within a tamarind-grove:
His parents and his sister young,—
A family of love.

His father, he said, had made his boat
From out a large sea-shell;
"And what a wondrous tale," said he,
"I shall this evening tell!"

His robes, he said, his mother had wove
From roots of an Indian-tree;
And he laugh'd at the clothes the seamen wore,
With the merriest mockery.

When the little child had stayed with us,
May-be an hour or so,
He smiled farewell to all on board,
And said that he would go.

"For I must be back again," said he,
"For me they all will wait;
I must be back again," quoth he,
"Or ever the day be late!"

"He shall not go!" the captain said;
"Haul up his boat and oar!
The pretty boy shall sail with us
To the famous English shore!

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"Thou shalt with me, my pretty boy;
I'll find thee a new mother;—
I've children three at home, and thou
To them shalt be a brother!"

"Nay, nay, I shall go back!" he said;
"For thee I do not know;—
I must be back again," he cried,
"Before the sun be low!"
Then sprang unto the vessel's side,
And made as he would go.

The captain was a strong, stern man;
None liked him overwell;
And to a seaman standing near,
Said he, with voice and look austere,
"Haul up yon cockle-shell!
And you, my boy, content you,
In this goodly ship to dwell!"

As one who gladly would believe
Some awful threat a joke,
So heard the child, with half a smile,
The words the captain spoke.

But when he saw them seize his boat,
And put his oar away,
The smile was gone, and o'er his face
Quick passed a pale dismay.

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And then a passion seized his frame,
As if he were possessed;
He stamped his little feet in rage,
And smote upon his breast.

'T was a wicked deed as e'er was done—
I longed to set him free;
And the impotence of his great grief
Was a grievous sight to me.

At length, when rage had spent itself,
His lofty heart gave way,
And, falling on his pretty knees,
At the captain's feet he lay.

"Oh take me back again!" he cried,
"Let me not tarry here,
And I 'll give thee sea-apples,
And honey rich and clear;

"And fetch thee heavy pearl-stones
From deep sea-caves below;
And red tree-gold and coral-tree,
If thou wilt let me go!

"Or if I must abide with thee,—
In thy great ship to dwell,
Let me but just go back again,
To bid them all farewell!"

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And at the word "farewell" he wept,
As if his heart would break;
The very memory of his tears
Sore sad my heart doth make.

The captain's self was almost moved
To hear his woful cry;
And there was not within the ship
One man whose eyes were dry.

When the captain saw the seamen's grief,
An angry man was he,
And shut his heart against the child,
For our great sympathy.

Down from the deck he took him
To his cabin all alone;
We saw him not for many a day,
But only heard his moan.

IT was a wicked deed, and heaven
All wickedness doth hate;
And vengeance on the oppressor
It cometh soon or late,—

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As you will see. There something was,
Even from the very night
Whereon the captain stole the child,
On board that was not right.

From out the cabin evermore,
Where they were all alone,
We heard, oh piteous sounds to hear,
A low and quiet moan;
And now and then cries sad enough
To move a heart of stone.

The captain had a conscious look,
Like one who doeth wrong,
And yet who striveth all the time
Against a conscience strong.

The seamen did not work at all
With a good will or a free;
And the ship, as she were sullen too,
Went slowly over the sea.
'T was then the captain from below
Sent down in haste for me.

I found him lying on his bed,
Oppressed with fever-pain;
And by his death-struck face, I saw
That he would not rise again,—

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That he, so lately hale and strong,
Would never rise again.

"I have done wickedly," said he,
"And Christ doth me condemn;—
I have children three on land," groaned he,
"And woe will come to them!

"I have been weighed, and wanting found;
I've done an evil deed!—
I pray thee, mate, 't is not too late,
Take back this child with speed!

"I have children three," again groaned he,
"And I pray that this be done!—
Thou wilt have order of the ship
When I am dead and gone:—
I pray thee do the thing I ask,
That mercy may be won!"

I vowed to do the thing he asked,
Upon the Testament;
And, true enough, that very day
To his account he went.

I took the little child away,
And set him on my knee,
In the free fresh air upon the deck,
But he spoke no word to me.

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I feared at first that all his grief
Had robbed him of his speech,
And that I ne'er by word or look,
His sunken soul could reach.

At length he woke from that dead woe,
Like one that long hath slept,
And cast his arms about my neck,
And long and freely wept.

I clasped him close unto my breast,
Yet knew not what to say,
To wile from him the misery
That on his spirit lay.

At length I did bethink me
Of Jesus Christ; and spake
To that poor lamb of all the woe
He suffered for our sake.

"For me and thee, dear child," I said,
"He suffered, and be sure
He will not lay a pang on thee
Without he give the cure!"

Like as the heavy clouds of night
Pass from the coming day,
So cleared the sullen weight of woe
From his dear soul away.

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Oh happy hours of converse sweet;—
The Christian's hope he knew,
And with an eager heart he gained
That knowledge sweet and new.

And ever by my side he kept,
Loving, and meek, and still:
But never more to him returned
His bold and wayward will:—
He had been tried and purified
From every taint of ill.

The eve whereon the captain died,
I turned the ship about,
And said unto the seamen good,
"We'll find the island out."

So back unto the place we came,
Where we the child had found;
And two full days, with anxious watch,
We sailed it all around.

And on the third, at break of day,
A far-off peak was seen;
And then the low-lands rose to view,
All woody, rich, and green.

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Down on his knees the child he fell,
When the mountains came in view,
And tears ran streaming from his eyes,—
For his own isle he knew.

And, with a wildly piercing tone,
He cried, "Oh mother dear,
Weep not,—I come, my mother!"
Long, long ere she could hear.

And soon we saw a mountain-top
Whereon a beacon burned;
Then as the good ship neared the land,
An answer was returned.

"Oh give to me my boat!" he cried,
"And give to me mine oar!"
Just then we saw another boat
Pushed from the island-shore.

A carved boat of sandal-wood,
Its sail a silken mat,
All richly wrought in rainbow-dyes,
And three within her sat.

Down from the ship into the sea
The little boy he sprung;
And the mother gave a scream of joy,
With which the island rung.

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Like some sea-creature beautiful
He swam the ocean-tide,
And ere we wondered at his skill
He clomb the shallop's side.

Next moment in his mother's arms
He lay, O sweet embrace!
Looking from her dear bosom up
Into her loving face.

The happiest and the sweetest sight
That e'er mine eyes will see,
Was the coming back of this poor child
Unto his family!

—Now wot ye of his parentage?
Sometime I'll tell you it:
Of meaner matter many a time
Has many a book been writ.

'T would make a pleasant history
Of joy scarce touched by woe;
Of innocence and love; but now
This only must you know.

His mother was of English birth,
Well-born, and young, and fair;
In the wreck of an East-Indiaman
She had been saved there.

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His father was the island's chief,
Goodly as man can be;
Adam, methinks in Paradise
Was such a one as he.

'T is not for my weak speech to tell
The joy so sweet and good,
Of these kind, simple islanders,
Nor all their gratitude.

Whate'er the island held they gave;
Delicious fruits and wines,
Rich-tinted shells from out the sea,
And ore from out their mines.

But I might not stay; and that same day
Again we turned about,
And, with the wind that changed then
Went from the harbor out.

—'T is joy to do an upright deed;
'T is joy to do a kind;
And the best reward of virtuous deeds
Is the peace of one's own mind.

But a blessing great went with the ship,
And with the freight she bore;
The pearl-shells turned to great account,
So did the island's ore;—

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But I someway lost my reckoning,
Nor found the island more.

And how the child became a man,
Or what to him befel,
As I never trod the island more,
Is not for me to tell.

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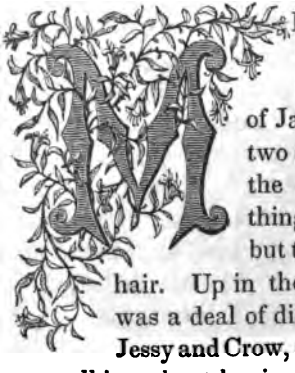
THE BIRDS AND THE GUINEA-PIGS:

OR,

HOW THE PANTRY-DOOR KEY WAS LOST, AND THEN FOUND.



MILD and pleasant was the weather, in the beginning of January; the Poet's two children ran about the garden with nothing on their heads but their beautiful long hair. Up in the pigeon-cote there was a deal of discussion going on: Jessy and Crow, one pair of pigeons, were talking about having eggs, and a young brood; while Snowdrop and her little husband Cravates said it was quite too soon to think of such a thing. These pigeons be-

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longed to the poet's children, who fed them twice every day and loved them very dearly. They were very handsome pigeons: Jessy was quite a rainbow of colors, and he strutted prodigiously; Crow, his wife, was very dark, all purple and green; nobody would have taken her for a hen-pigeon, she was so large and grand. The other pair, Snowdrop and Cravates, were very different; she was as white as snow, and looked as sleek and round as if she had been cut out of marble; her husband, Cravates, was of rich red brown, with a white ring round his neck, which the children called his cravat. On the floor of the dove-cote lived a pair of guinea-pigs, Toby and Jenny. Toby was a quiet old fellow that lived very much to himself, and never troubled his mind about anything; he squeaked a little to himself; he always found plenty to eat, and that was all he cared for. Jenny, his wife, was a little plump, busy, merry guinea-pig, that not only looked after her own large family, but kept up a deal of intercourse with the pigeons: they were on the best terms in the world, and now, when there was all this discussion about whether

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the pigeons should begin to lay or not, she sided with Jessy and his wife, and told them by all means to make a nest, and have a brood, for that it was an uncommonly fine season, there would be no more cold weather, not a bit! and even if there were, what would it matter;—fat, well-feathered birds like them never felt the cold; for her part, she never felt it: she had forgotten what cold was. The poet's children, she said, never let them want: it was all nonsense talking about want; for her part, she did not believe in the existence of such a thing! It was only a bugbear to frighten ignorant pigeons and guinea-pigs with. Jessy and Crow said the same; they said they always felt so warm about their hearts, and their feathers were so thick, that even after they had eaten their fill there was plenty of food, so they would have a brood.

Cravates and Snowdrop were convinced by what they heard, and when Crow's young ones began to peep from the egg, Snowdrop had been sitting three days. Jenny, the guinea-pig, had seven little ones. It was the merriest little region of life that ever was

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seen. Guinea-pigs and pigeons were all as warm and fat as possible. The poet's children were as happy as these little creatures; they clapped their hands and screamed with delight when they saw the young pigeons come out of the shell. Snowdrop and Cravates were now full of family business, first one sat on the eggs, and then the other, and in two weeks they also would have two young pigeons.

There were many changes of weather in January: now it was fine and mild, and then it was bitterly cold, and froze and snowed, and thawed and froze again; the pond was covered with ice, and little boys slided. At the commencement of February it grew colder and colder every day; the earth was like a hard board, nothing could come out of it, and the little snowdrops and hepaticas, and winter aconites, that had ventured in the mild weather to put up their heads, now were quite sorry for it, and were so pinched with cold they did not know what to do. They said one to another how cold the bed was, and they wished so much that snow would fall, and thus give them blan-

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kets and coverlets to keep them warm; but no snow came, and every day it froze harder and harder.

The poet's children, like their pigeons, felt very little of the cold, for they were well fed, and full of life and strength, and had warm woollen clothes on; twice every day they went and fed their pigeons and their guinea-pigs. Snowdrop's young ones were ready to be hatched, and Crow's were growing famously; but they had as yet only greyish down on their little bodies. One day they said to their mother that something "bit them." "It is only the cold," she replied; "silly little things!" and she told them to lie closer under her feather petticoat, which was lined with down, and so they did; and they felt no more cold, for their mother and her feather petticoat were as warm as a little fire. Just then, old Jessy, the father, came in; he had been taking his morning airing, and it was amazing what a deal of cold air seemed to come in with him; the very tips of his feathers seemed frozen; but he said he was as warm as a toast; that he felt nothing of the cold. He said he had been up at the

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rookery; that they were all in a pretty state there; they had begun to build some days before, while the weather was mild; but that now everything was at a stand-still; and they were all talking of a famine; they looked very discontented and down-hearted, and they said they did not know what would be the end of all this; they could get nothing out of the ground, and they could get nothing out of the air,—what then was to become of them? Jessy said it was very unpleasant to hear all this; and he told them that, for his part, he believed there was plenty of food to be had, if they would only look for it; he had often heard their outcries of famine, but he thought it was all discontent, and of people's own bringing about. The rooks were very angry to hear him talk thus, and if he had not flown off he did not know what the consequences might have been; he then went into the poet's garden, and there were all the foolish flowers that had come out too soon, shivering like naked beggars in the street, till it was quite unpleasant to see them; he told them, that they should have stopped at home by their warm

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fires, and in bed among the blankets, and that if they would run themselves into trouble, they must take the consequences. The flowers made no reply, for their poor mouths were so stiff with cold that they could not open them. The next thing he saw were the little birds of the garden; there were robins, and tom-tits, and red-starts, and hundreds of sparrows; they had all puffed out their feathers like so many muffs to keep them warm, and they looked plump enough, but all they talked about was this famine. There was nothing to be had, and they thought they must all die; they looked very dismal and dispirited; they could not even twitter; they did nothing but hop about on the hard, stony ground, and pick at little bits of dirt, out of which nothing came; or if anything eatable were in it, ten to one but three or four of them fell to quarreling about it. They told dismal tales about many that had died, and said they expected that they too should die of want; they said everything was against them this winter; that last summer so little hedge-fruit came to maturity, and thus the great store of nature was

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empty; there were no berries on the pyracantha that grew up one side of the poet's house this year, and that was a great loss; and they did not know why, but the poet's children seemed to have forgotten them, they found no crumbs now, as they used to do. Oh! it was very melancholy, and they knew that they should all die of want. The blackbirds and the thrushes that sate upon the boughs about, sighed out the same melancholy ditty; they said that this great frost had locked up the pantry-door, and there was no chance but of their dying of hunger.

It troubled Jessy the pigeon to hear all this. He felt very uncomfortable, and he wished not to believe what he had heard. He told his wife, and Snowdrop, and her husband, and old Jenny the guinea-pig; and just as he had finished, up came, like two beautiful angels, the poet's children, and scattered tares and peas for the pigeons, and brought bread and milk and green sprouts for the guinea-pigs. There was such plenty in this dovecote; there could be no want out of doors—there could be no famine;—it must be discontent, and improvidence, and

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bad management which brought the others into their evil plight. Whilst the pigeons were thus settling the question, old Toby, the father guinea-pig, who had not yet spopen, asked abruptly, "Why did they lock the pantry-door—we always let ours stand open, and therefore we always have plenty." They all said that Toby had hit the right nail on the head, and Jessy siad before long he would go out and ask the same question of all the discontented out of doors.

The frost grew harder and harder, and one morning a heavy yellowish cloud filled the sky, and the white feathery snow began to fall; all day and all night it fell. The garden was beautiful; it lay two feet deep upon the ground, and on the upper surface of every leafless branch and bough, and bent the evergreens like heavy plumes. Everything was as silent as death; not a bird twittered. The little snowdrops, and hepaticas, and winter aconites, said one to another when the snow began to fall, "The blessing is come at last; now we shall go to sleep, and lie warm and snug till the better days come." They closed their eyes, and

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fell into the sweetest sleep, and the soft, delicate snow, like loving hands, heaped up the warm covering around them.

The little birds—robins, and redstarts, and tomtits, and the little good-for-nothing sparrows—peeped from under the broad leaves of the ivy that thickly covered the whole of the poet's house, and did nothing but sigh all day long. "It will be a deep, deep snow," said they; "it may berhaps lie four or five weeks; the pantry-door key will be lost in the snow, and how shall we ever get the door open again?" The snow fell thicker and faster, and in the afternoon the poet's gardener cut a path through the snow from the kitchen-door to the dovecote. The old garden blackbird, the bird that had cheered the hearts of the poet and his children all last summer, sate half-starved in a hole in the sycamore tree, and saw the two children, wrapped up in great coats and cloaks till only their eyes and the tips of their noses could be seen, go from the kitchen-door along the path that had been cut in the snow to the dove-house. They carried tares and peas in a basket, and soaked bread in a basin;

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they were going to feed their favorites, and never once thought of all the little hungry stomachs and longing eyes that were all around them.

"The pantry-door is fast locked, and the key is now lost!" was sighed out all that night from under the roof and from the crannies of the old walls, and from under the ivy leaves, and from the hollows of the sycamore trunk. "The pantry-door key is lost, and we shall die of hunger!" The poor rooks left off building; the snow lay a foot deep in every unfinished nest; the last year's rooks asked the old ones if they had ever known the pantry-door key lost before. Very few of them ever had; they had heard their grandfathers talk of such a thing in their time, but they did not think it could have been as bad as this! The key of the pantry-door had never certainly been *quite* lost before; but they hoped it might be found. The young rooks were quite disheartened, they did not believe that the key ever would be found. They were ready to grow desperate; it was all that the most ex-

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perienced could do to persuade them to patience and hope.

The poet stood at his window and looked out; the snow had lost its first purity; it had fallen from the tree branches, and had been shaken out from the evergreens, lest it should break them; it lay like a casing of marble over all the earth: it was hard frozen, and glittered in the sun like crystal points. It was now a week since it had fallen, and there seemed no chance of the frost going. The poet saw his children rush from the dove-house with their rosy faces and bright eyes: Crow's two young pigeons were full feathered; how they had grown! and Snowdrop's were like two little balls of down. The children were on their way to tell this to their father.

But before they came he had something to tell them. As he stood at his window he had seen the rooks on their way through the cold wintry sky to the distant meadows. What could the poor rooks find there for food? The thought fell on his heart with a sadness. He thought of all the suffering creatures in this bitter season, and he wish-

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ed that he could help and save them all. Whilst he was thus thinking, he heard the twittering of the little birds in the laurustinas round the window, and he saw the old blackbird sitting just above in the arbutus. Hunger had made them very tame. He heard their mournful twitter, and he understood it—for a poet understands all languages, especially those which come from sorrowful hearts. At that moment his two children came in: "Hush," said he, and they trod as softly as falling snow; "listen to what the little birds are all saying. They say, 'the pantry-door is locked, and the key is lost! there is no one to feed us, and we shall all die of hunger!' This is what the little birds are saying.

The tears started to the children's eyes, and their father continued, "Thus say the little birds; and they speak truly; their pantry-door is locked, and the key is lost; many of them will die; they are now like so many little skeletons; they have puffed out their feathers to keep them warm, but they are starved for all that; for the famished have so little warmth within them. 'We

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shall all die of hunger,' say they. 'Alas! that the pantry-door should be locked and the key lost! No one pities us—we shall all die!' 'Do not despair!' replies that old blackbird in the arbutus," said the poet, directing with his finger the tearful eyes of the children to the bird,—"'do not despair; help comes often when we least expect it. Bear on patiently a little longer,—a little longer bear up, and help will come!'" These were the words of the blackbird, which the poet told to his children; but scarcely were they ended, when the blackbird turned its head quickly and then fell, as if dead, from the bough into the snow. Without a word to the children, the poet rushed out, and the next moment they saw him in the garden before the window; all the little birds flew away frightened; and, treading ancle deep in snow, he brought in the dead blackbird.

"Poor, dear blackbird!" said the children, with almost breaking hearts, when they saw it in their father's hands in the warm room where he brought it. "Poor, dear little thing! and it has died of want, and we have never fed the birds all this hard time!"

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"Yes," said their father, "it is a serious thing when creatures with appetites find the pantry-door locked, and the key lost. You must think about these things!"

"But I think," said he, again speaking, and this time more cheerfully, "that this bird is not dead; I believe it is only benumbed, and I tkink we can revive it." The children rushed about like wild creatures, for they had such loving hearts. They could find neither a cage nor a basket at the moment, but they brought an old last year's garden-bonnet, trimmed with blue ribbon; they put some warm flannel in it, laid the bird within it, and then tied the bonnet in a handkerchief; their father said he would take charge of it for them, in his study, and they must go and see if they could not get the pantry open for the other poor little birds.

They could not understand what the birds said as well as their father, because they were only poet's children; so in the evening, when all the birds had had a good dinner, he told them what had been said. They had said that the old blackbird was right; help had come when they at least

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expected it; somebody had picked the lock or burst the pantry-door open, and behold every shelf was full of bread! They wondered how it was;—they were only birds, and so they could not tell; this, however, was certain, there was plenty now where but a minute before there had been famine. It was just as the good blackbird had said. He was a prophet and a poet, and yet he who knew all this, and had cheered them with hope, was dead! That was a sad thing! They must confess that he was a great poet; they had not thought much of him when he was alive; but they must raise a monument to him now he is dead. "But he is not dead," said the children; "he is all alive in the magpie's cage, and very happy!"

"But they do not know it," said the father; "they think him dead and mourn for him. They thought very little of him when he was amongst them, but they will honor him now they think him dead."

The frost still lasted; and the pantry remained as full as ever. Jessy went and told them in the dove-house that he knew he was

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right. It was all a needless outcry about the famine; the birds only wanted to excite compassion that they might induce the pigeons and guinea-pigs to give up their food; they made themselves look miserable and half famished to get fed without working; that they were as brisk now as larks; that he heard a deal said still among the rooks about this pantry-door key being lost, but after what he had seen he put no faith in it. It was a mere pretence.

At the end of February the frost broke up; the snow melted all at once; the hard stony ground was like a wet sponge. The grass looked green, and the tree-stems brim-full of of life; the little snowdrops and hepaticas, and winter aconites, looked round them in astonishment. "Something must have happened," said they one to another; for they were not wide awake yet—"we must have been asleep a long time; come, let us get up, we feel such life and strength within us! Hark, that must be a thrush. It is spring, as sure as we are alive!"

The little dear robins and redstarts came hopping among the flowers, and they wel-

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comed each the other; and then the flowers understood all about the dreadful time that had been since they went to sleep. Many birds were dead; that was a certainty: many a dear little bird that had sung to the flowers last summer would never sing to them again! Among those that had died, they said, was the grand old poet, the blackbird; he was a wonderful creature; he suffered dreadfully in the famine; but he tried to cheer all their hearts, and foretold the better times, and the opening of the pantry-door, just before it took place; but he never saw it himself. That was the one sorrow they had to deplore; and they did deplore it sincerely.

The flowers were very sorry, tears hung in the snowdrop's beautiful eyes, for she loved the blackbird. At that moment all the little birds flew away, for they heard footsteps coming down the garden walk. It was the poet's children, with the great magpie's cage, in which was the blackbird. They set it just opposite the snowdrops and the other flowers, for they said, "he shall see how

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beautiful the garden is the moment he gets out of the cage."

The blackbird sprang from the open door of the cage, and flew into a hawthorn-tree that grew just by. All the little flowers saw him, and could hardly believe their eyes. The moment he alighted on the tree, he carolled forth such a hymn of thankfulness and joy as filled the whole garden. The little birds could scarcely believe their ears. He was alive and well! His song told everything, and every one interpreted it his own way. The poet heard it as he sat in his study; it told him that the spring-time —a time of plenty and of gladness—was at hand. A gushing tide of love and gratitude warmed his heart; he took up his pen, and wrote words which were immortal.

It reached the fat pigeons on the house-top, as they were strutting about with their young broods, now out in the great world for the first time; and old Jessy said to his wife, that if it really were true about the famine, he was glad that such a fine singer as the blackbird had got well through it! It reached the poor rooks, that had suffered

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so dreadfully in the famine, as they sate on their elm-tree tops, and taking the song for a good omen, they began their building again that very moment. As to the little flowers down in the garden-beds, they were so full of joy, that they reared up their heads, and opened their beautiful eyes to the sun, and shot down their little roots under ground, and woke the sleepy worms and little shining insects, and told them it was time to be stirring, for the beautiful spring season had just begun.

All that day nothing was heard but a shouting on the tree-tops—the burden of the song was the same everywhere—"The key that was lost so long has been found; the pantry-door stands wide open; and there is plenty for all!" The poet's children walked hand in hand in the garden, and were happier than ever.

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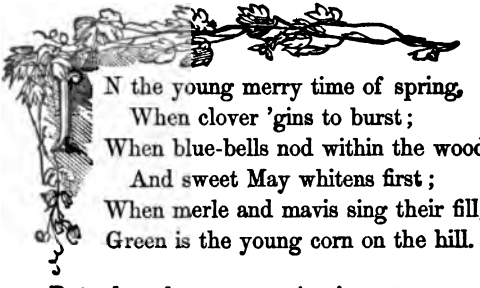
CORN-FIELDS.



IN the young merry time of spring,
When clover 'gins to burst;
When blue-bells nod within the wood,
And sweet May whitens first;
When merle and mavis sing their fill,
Green is the young corn on the hill.

But when the merry spring is past,
And summer groweth bold,
And in the garden and the field
A thousand flowers unfold;
Before a green leaf yet is sere,
The young corn shoots into the ear.

But then as day and night succeed,
And summer weareth on,
And in the flowery garden-beds
The red-rose groweth wan,

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And hollyhock and sunflowers tall
O'ertop the mossy garden-wall:

When on the breath of autumn breeze,
  From pastures dry and brown,
Goes floating, like an idle thought,
  The fair white thistle down;
O then what joy to walk at will,
Upon the golden harvest-hill

What joy in dreamy ease to lie
  Amid a field new-shorn,
And see all round on sun-lit slopes,
  The piled up shocks of corn,
And send the fancy wandering o'er
All pleasant harvest-fields of yore.

I feel the day; I see the field;
  The quivering of the leaves;
And good old Jacob and his house
  Binding the yellow sheaves;
And at this very hour I seem
To be with Joseph in his dream.

I see the fields of Bethlehem,
  And reapers many a one,

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Bending unto their sickles' stroke,
And Boaz looking on;
And Ruth, the Moabitess fair,
Among the gleaners stooping there.

Again, I see a little child,
His mother's sole delight;
God's living gift of love unto
The kind, good Shunamite;
To mortal pangs I see him yield,
And the lad bear him from the field.

The sun-bathed quiet of the hills;
The fields of Galilee,
That eighteen hundred years agone
Were full of corn, I see,
And the dear Saviour take his way
'Mid ripe ears on the Sabbath-day.

O golden fields of bending corn,
How beautiful they seem!—
The reaper-folk, the piled-up sheaves,
To me are like a dream;
The sunshine and the very air
Seem of old time, and take me there!

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THE PIGEON-HOUSE.

AN AUTUMN TALE, OF THE SWEET USES OF ADVERSITY.

FAIR Summer was past; the roses, and the jasmines, and the sweet peas, were all over and gone for this year; but the poet's garden was full of flowers for all that. The dahlias were out, and the chrysanthemums and china-asters, and great big cock's-combs, like crimson madrapores, made of velvet: the leaves were changing on the trees; but apples were yet hanging golden and red upon the boughs, and looking as beautiful as flowers; and as frosts had not

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yet come, there were whole borders of scarlet geraniums, and verbenum, and other borders of heliotrope, which filled the air with a soft and delicious perfume.

It was real autumn; but as yet without any signs of decay; and in early morning, when the poet took his usual walks, with his children beside him, they found a thousand objects of beauty and interest to linger over. Above all things did they admire the webs of the spiders, which were at that hour hung with minute dew-drops, which, as the sun shone upon them looked like so many tiny prismatic mirrors. There were yet a few butterflies and bees flying about, but the poor little butterflies seemed rather benumbed or sleepy; they flew a little way, and then settled upon something; often on the gravel walk, as if they fancied that must be a pretty variegated flower; they were evidently a little bewildered in their heads.

Everything had undergone a change since the spring-time, when we wrote about the red peony shoots piercing the garden-mould, and the lilacs and laburnums, and the crim-

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son hawthorn in blossom; the eggs that the birds then sate on were now little living birds, that flew with great flocks of their kind into the stubble fields. The rooks had reared their young ones, and so had the blackbirds, and all for the time present were living in a land of plenty, forgetting that in the early spring the pantry-door key had been lost for a season. Everything was changed, but most of all was there a change in the pigeon house, where Jessy and Crow and Snowdrop and Cravates had lived "on clover," as the saying is, when all the world around them were starving. They lived then, as they did now, in the higher regions of the dove-house, and the fat little guinea-pigs, Toby and Jenny, with all their numerous family, lived below them.

When first we spoke of these pigeons, Jessy, and his handsome wife, Crow, in her blue and green shot-satin, were the lord and lady of the place, and Cravates and his wife their respectable neighbors. Jessy and Crow built their nest, and laid their eggs, and reared their broods, and all things went prosperously with them. Cravates and Snowdrop did

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the same, but they were unfortunate. "Cravates must be in bad circumstances," said Jessy to his wife; "he has such a down-cast look with him. He never goes strutting about on the roof in the sunshine, as I do. You may take my word for it, his banker has broke, or he has over-speculated, or he has got an execution in his house!" and with that the next time they met on the roof, Jessy swaggered up to him and shoved him aside. Jessy was tremendously proud in those days; and his wife stood by and admired what she thought her husband's spirit; and what was still worse, their eldest brood, now a couple of flaunting pigeons, named Pecksey and Flapsey, seeing the little respect their parents had for Cravates in his trouble, never saw him without treading on his toes, or on his tail, till it had quite a draggled and disconsolate look. Poor Cravates did not resent this ill-treatment; but when he saw them coming, tried quietly to get out of their way. Nobody pitied Cravates but the poet's children; and tears were often in their eyes when they saw his troubles and the unkindness of his neigh-

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bors. These children were to the pigeon-house like the good angels of God to human beings. They looked on and pitied the sorrowing, and mourned over the arrogance of the proud; but morning and night they duly gave to all of their bounty—to the good and to the evil alike.

One day, while poor Cravates was in his trouble, a new pair of pigeons made their appearance in the house; they were both dressed in black velvet and white satin; she wore a black velvet dress, and white satin petticoat; he, a black velvet coat, and white satin waistcoat and breeches. They looked exactly as if they were going to court, and as if they had new dresses for every day. *They* were evidently in good circumstances; they were pigeons of birth and breeding, and they settled themselves down in their new home with a self-possession and propriety that was quite instructive. Jessy and Crow saw from the first moment that they must be treated with respect. The new comers were Dico and Dixi. Jessy could see at a glance that they had ancestors, perhaps, as far back as the Norman conquest; they

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looked as people do who have loads of money in the bank, and who, from time immemorial, have had a fine old family seat of their own. If they had been men and women, they would have been the most noble the Marquis and Marchioness Dico and Dixi, and their children would have been earls and countesses. Jessy immediately sought to make their acquaintance, and endeavored to enlist them in the persecution of the poor unfortunate Cravates. Dico and Dixi, however, treated Jessy with the utmost coolness; they said they did not wish for his acquaintance, and as to poor Cravates, he and his troubles were matters of no consequence to them; they knew nothing of him, either for or against; that there was a deal of trouble in the world,—there always had been and always must be,—but they did not see what they had to do with it. They must have thought Jessy a snob and an upstart, a purse-proud fellow, and a *parvenu*, from the way in which they treated him. As to poor Cravates, he had too much on his own spirits to trouble himself about any of his neighbors. Jessy's wife and his eldest

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brood, Pecksey and Flapsey, were equally unsuccessful in making acquaintance with the grand new pigeons; they, therefore, set them down for a couple of proud aristocrats, who thought themselves too good to associate with their fellows; they were very much vexed, but they did not dare to begin any persecution; for Dico and Dixi looked like those whom it was better not to meddle with.

About this time Cravates died; and Jessy and his wife, and Pecksey and Flapsey, and the other young pigeons, had a deal to say respecting the *post-mortem* examination, which the poet and his children had made. Something like copper was found in his stomach. "He had taken poison," said Jessy, "no doubt, therefore, but that his circumstances were bad, and that he was on the point of bankruptcy, and had committed suicide." He even told this to Dico and Dixi; but it did not interest them at all! Never in this world was there such pride as this! Jessy thought how he should like to tread on their black velvet and white satin: but there seemed no chance of such a thing!

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Cravates was dead. Pecksey and Flapsey set up housekeeping together; and the most noble the Marquis and Marchioness Dico and Dixi had an heir and an heiress. Snowdrop was solitary; but neither Jessy nor Crow offered her any consolation; nay, even, I am ashamed to confess it—when they saw her come out to sit in the sunshine on the roof, they shoved her off, just as they had done poor Cravates; they strutted about, and admired one another as the sun shone on their beautiful plumage, and grew more and more self-satisfied and tyrannical every day.

But a great change was at hand. One day, a stout-built, thick-necked, positive, domineering sort of pigeon, was introduced as a resident into this little community. He was dressed in black, with a white patch under his beak. He was the famous champion, Blackbeard; not so called because his beard was black, but because he wore black and had a white beard.

Jessy, when he saw this second new arrival, of course introduced himself; but such a fellow as this Blackbeard had never been in the pigeon-house before. He did not strut

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about in the conceited way that Jessy and Crow did, as if they were always thinking about themselves; nor did he carry himself at all with the cool self-possession of the most noble Dico and Dixi; he was a positive, dogmatical, overbearing, unscrupulous fellow, with impudence and audacity for anything. Jessy thought at first he was just the fellow to join with him in putting down the pride of their aristocratic neighbors; but Blackbeard cared nothing for the pride and indifference and self-possession of Dico and Dixi; he did not trouble himself about them. Jessy and Crow set down Blackbeard for a low, vulgar ruffian, and they hoped Dico and Dixi would join them in putting such an insufferable fellow down. But Dico and Dixi would do nothing of the kind; and though they never had any intimacy with Blackbeard, it was not long before Jessy had the mortification of seeing that they were quite as civil to him, in their cold, proud way, as they had ever been to himself—perhaps a little more so.

In a very short time there was a regular feud between Jessy and Blackbeard. Jessy

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had never in his life met with his match before; and, one day, when he was strutting about in the sunshine on the roof, that his wife might admire him, what should Blackbeard do but strut up to him, and try to tread on his toes. It was more than Jessy could bear. His spirit was roused, and he strutted up to him in return, meaning to shove him right off the roof; but he might as well have tried to shove off the roof itself. They fought, and each said he had won the victory. Poor Jessy! a most uncomfortable feeling rose in his mind that Blackbeard was not so easy to be conquered. He wondered that Pecksey and Flapsey, his own offspring, did not join with him, and give the fellow a regular beating; and then it came out that Blackbeard was paying attentions to Flapsey, and there was every reason to suppose that she would become his wife. Here was an affair in the pigeon-house!

To Jessy it seemed as if the very world were coming to an end; there was a convulsion everywhere; nobody seemed quiet and cool but Dico and Dixi, and they did not condescend to mix themselves up in the

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affair. Jessy, who now began to feel the force of adverse circumstances, bethought himself of the guardian and guiding angels of the pigeon-house, and wondered they did not interfere to put things to right.

Things, however, had to get a great deal worse before they could be mended. The poet's children looked on and mourned, but the time for their interference had not yet come. Blackbeard cast off the poor solitary Snowdrop, and Flapsey and he became husband and wife. He had a prodigious notion of his own importance, and was determined to master Jessy, but he did not ask Dico and Dixi, or anybody, to help him, because he fancied he was strong enough for anything.

Jessy and Crow had now another young brood,—it was the fourth or fifth they had had, for they were a most domestic couple—the very best of parents. Blackbeard turned all this into ridicule; he said that people were foolish for bothering themselves with large families; so his wife Flapsey sate on one egg, which in due time was hatched.

Poor Jessy never now went out to sun himself on the roof, or to pick tares and barley,

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which morning and night the poet's children scattered out of that basket which never was empty, without Blackbeard thrusting himself before him, and shoving him away, or picking up the very grains that he wanted. Again and again they fought, and now it was no uncommon thing for Blackbeard to tread upon Jessy's toes.

There were several beams which ran across the pigeon-house. Jessy had his nest over one of them, Blackbeard over another, and the mansion of the noble Dico and Dixi was just by a third; and beside them, there were others, which, like public pleasure-grounds, had hitherto been common to every one. Now, however, Blackbeard laid claim to all; he even encroached upon the demesne of Dico and Dixi; as to Jessy, he would not suffer him to set his foot anywhere but on his own beam, whilst he himself marched about here and there, up this beam and down that, with all the daring swagger of a bravo.

Anybody who had seen Jessy now might have said that *his* circumstances were embarrassed, that *he* had been over-speculating, and that *he* would be a bankrupt some of these

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days, so careworn and dejected did he begin to look. He no longer strutted about on the roof in the sunshine; and when he saw Blackbeard approaching, he flew away. His spirit was subdued; everything seemed gloomy and discouraging. The summer was past—the long, bright and warm days, the days of his glory and self-gratulation, were over. The leaves of the sycamore were brown and curled, and every wind that blew shook hundreds of them down. The lark, the linnet, and the blackbird, that eloquent poet of spring, of gladness, and of hope, were silent; he and the rest of his fellows were out on the abundant stubbles, rejoicing in the bounty of autumn. Jessy sate alone, and to him the world seemed a dreary history of oppression and discouragement.—Blackbeard, who had neither sentiment nor pity, thought only of crushing the bird that he hated; and he fell upon him on every occasion, and persecuted and tormented him. Jessy would now have given anything to be quiet; perhaps he now remembered poor Cravates with pity, and wished that he had shown him kindness and mercy. He and

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Crow sate together on their beam, and Blackbeard swaggered about over his broad territory; he was lord and master of the pigeon-house. He had humbled the pride of Jessy, but that did not satisfy him; and it seemed now as if he would have his life. Jessy's and Crow's feathers, plucked by Blackbeard, flew about the pigeon-house, and even in the autumn sunshine and among the falling leaves of the sycamore. It was a melancholy sight.

Poor Jessy sate on the roof of the garden-house, and long trails of the gossamer-spider's web floated around him. The garden was as still as death, excepting when the wind passed mournfully among the shivering leaves, and scattered them down with every breath; or now and then, when an apple fell on the grass from the old apple-tree with a dull sound, and then lay motionless. There was something mournful in the garden, and Jessy thought of his own torn and dingy plumage when he saw the seared and unsightly leaves of the trees. His pride was gone, like the pride of the year; they were both sad and dishonored together.

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With slow steps the poet walked up and down his garden. An expansive spirit of love filled his heart, which was sedate rather than gay; for he, too, was thinking on many things which were calculated to sadden.

All at once, amid the silence of the place and the melancholy of the fading and falling leaves, a little robin redbreast began to sing. Its song was low but clear, and tender as the song of an angel. The poet heard it, and as he was a real poet, he understood every tone that it uttered. It sang of the sweet uses of adversity; how winter gives birth to spring, how death opens the portals of eternal life; how suffering and sorrow, unkindness and ingratitude, and the hardness of men's hearts, bring forth love, and pity, and forgiveness in noble and pure natures; it sang how that there is no suffering, no humiliation, no sorrow, which has not its compensation, and that in a hundred-fold degree, if we will only receive our affliction in meekness and patience, and the submission of love. It spoke of angels that watch over the mourner,—that breathe into his soul consolations which cannot be spoken by words; it spoke of hope,

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and truth, and faith; and the chorus of his song was still "the uses of adversity are sweet."

The sorrowing bird and the poet received willingly the consolatory influence. Crow joined Jessy on the roof, but there was no more strutting about, no desire to lord it over others. They sat side by side in silence, as if they were waiting for something. And they were, but they knew it not.

Justice and Mercy had in the meantime done their work in the pigeon-house Blackbeard, the tyrant oppressor, and his weak companion, Flapsey, were gone; their fellows would see them no more, and their nestling lay beside Jessy's and Crow's in their nest. Now was an opportunity for them to return good for evil.

Jessy and Crow fed the young bird as if it had been their own. The poet's chidren told their father, and he explained to them all that the robin had sung of the sweet uses of adversity.

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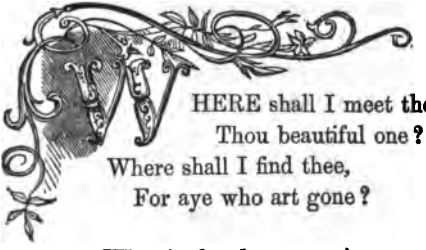
THE SPIRIT'S QUESTIONINGS.



WHERE shall I meet thee,
Thou beautiful one?
Where shall I find thee,
For aye who art gone?

What is the shape
To thy clear spirit given?
Where is thy home
In the infinite heaven?

I see thee, but still
As thou wert upon earth,
In thy bodied delight,
In thy wonder and mirth!

But now thou art one
Of the glorified band,
Who have touched the shore
Of the far spirit-land!

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And thy shape is fair,
And thy locks are bright,
In the living stream
Of the quenchless light.

And thy spirit's thought
It is pure, and free
From darkness and doubt
And from mystery!

And thine ears have drunk
The awful tone
Of the First and Last,
Of the Ancient One!

And the dwellers old
Thy steps have met,
Where the lost is found,
And the past is yet.

Where shall I find thee,
For aye who art gone?
Where shall I meet thee,
Thou beautiful one?

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THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.

HOW goodly is the earth!
Look round about and see
The green and fertile field
The mighty branchèd tree;
The little flowers out-spread
In such variety!
Behold the lovely things
That dance on airy wings;
The birds whose summer pleasure
Is not of stinted measure;
The grassy vales, the hills;
The flower-embordered rills;
The clouds that lie at rest
Upon the noonday's breast;
Behold all these and know
How goodly is the earth!

How goodly is the earth!
Its mountain-tops behold;
Its rivers broad and strong;
Its solemn forests old;
Its wealth of flocks and herds;
Its precious stones and gold;

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Behold the radiant isles
With which old ocean smiles;
Behold the seasons run
Obedient to the sun;
The gracious showers descend;
Life springing without end;
By day the glorious light;
The starry pomp by night;—
Behold all these, and know
How goodly is the earth.

How goodly is the earth!
Yet if this earth be made
So goodly, wherein all
That is shall droop and fade;
Wherein the glorious light
Hath still its fellow shade;—
So goodly, where is strife
Ever 'twixt death and life;
Where trouble dims the eye;
Where sin hath mastery;
How much more bright and fair,
Will be that region, where
The saints of God shall rest
Rejoicing with the blessed;—
Where pain is not, nor death,—
The Paradise of God!

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Part XX.

THE TURTLE DOVE:

AND OTHER STORIES.

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LITTLE CHILDREN.

SPORTING through the forest wide;
Playing by the water-side;
Wandering o'er the heathy fells;
Down within the woodland dells;
All among the mountains wild,
Dwelleth many a little child!

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In the baron's hall of pride;
By the poor man's dull fireside;
'Mid the mighty, 'mid the mean,
Little children may be seen,
Like the flowers that spring up fair,
Bright and countless everywhere!

In the far isles of the main;
In the desert's lone domain;
In the savage mountain-glen,
'Mong the tribes of swarthy men;
Wheresoe'er a foot hath gone;
Wheresoe'er the sun hath shone
On a league of peopled ground,
Little children may be found!

Blessings on them! they in me
Move a kindly sympathy,
With their wishes, hopes, and fears;
With their laughter and their tears;
With their wonder so intense,
And their small experience!

Little children, not alone
On the wide earth are ye known,
'Mid its labors and its cares,
'Mid its sufferings and its snares.

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Free from sorrow, free from strife,
In the world of love and life,
Where no sinful thing hath trod
In the presence of your God,
Spotless, blameless, glorified,
Little children, ye abide!

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THE YOUNG TURTLE-DOVE OF CARMEL

GREAT many turtle-doves lived about Mount Carmel. There were orange trees and cypresses there, and among these the doves lived all the winter; they had broods early in the year, and towards the end of March, or beginning of April, they set off like great gentlefolks to spend "the season" near London. All last winter a young English musician, who was very pale and thin, lived with the monks in the monastery on Mount Carmel. He went to Syria because, as a child, he had loved so to hear his mother

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read in the Bible; she often read to him about Elijah and Elisha on Mount Carmel, and he used to think then, that if ever he were rich, he would go and see all the wonderful places mentioned in the Bible. He never was rich, and yet he came here. He was very pale and thin, and had large beautiful but sorrowful eyes. He took a violin with him to Mount Carmel; it was the greatest treasure he had on earth. He played the most wonderful things on his violin that ever were heard, and everybody who heard him said that he was a great musician. In the winters he suffered much from the cold and the fogs of England; so last summer he saved a little money, and set off with his violin for Syria; and all last winter he lived in the monastery on Mount Carmel, among the grave old monks. There was one little old monk, a very, very old man, who soon grew very fond of him; he too had been a musician, but he was now almost childish, and had forgotten how to play; so the monks took from him his old violin, because they said he made such a noise with it. He cried to part with it like a child, poor old man!

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The young musician had a little chamber in the monastery, which overlooked the sea; nobody can think what a beautiful view it had! The sun shone in so warm and pleasant, and a little group of cypresses grew just below the window. The young man often and often stood at the window, and looked out on the sea, and down into the cypress trees, among the thick branches of which he heard the turtle-doves cooing. He loved to hear those turtle-doves—and so did the little old monk. One day early in January he saw that the turtle-doves had built a nest just in sight; he watched the birds taking it by turns to sit on the eggs, and his heart was full of love to them; they turned up their gentle eyes to him, but they never flew away, for they saw in his mild and sorrowful countenance, that he would not hurt them.

Beautiful and melancholy music sounded for half the day down from his window to where the birds sate; it had a strange charm to the doves; they thought it was some grand, new kind of nightingale come down from heaven. The little old monk

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sate in his long Carmelite frock, with his hands laid together on his knees, and his head down on his breast, and listened with his whole soul; to him too it came as a voice of heaven, which seemed to call him away to a better land; great tears often fell from his eyes, but they were not sorrowful tears; they were tears of love, tears which were called forth by a feeling of some great happiness which was coming for him, but which he could not quite understand; he was, as you know, a very old man; the oldest in all the monastery, and almost childish.

The music from the young man's room sounded finer and finer every day; as early spring came on he grew very poorly; the little old monk used to bring him his meals into his chamber, because it tired him so to go up and down the long stone staircase to the great eating-room. There never was anybody so kind as the little old monk.

A pair of young doves were hatched in the nest, and when the sun shone in at the window, the young man used to sit in his dressing-gown, with a pillow in his chair, and look out over the sea, and down into the

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cypress-tree were the turtle-doves' nest was; he would sit for hours and look at them, and many beautiful thoughts passed through his mind as he did so. Never had his heart been so full of love as now; the little old monk used to sit on a low seat before him, waiting for the time when he asked for his violin; that was a great happiness to them both. The musician loved him very much, and often when he played, he meant to pour bright and comfortable thoughts into his innocent, affectionate soul

It was the end of March; the turtle-doves were all preparing for their flight to England; the pair that had built under the musician's window had a home in some old quiet woods in Surrey, where it was delightfully mild and pleasant even in winter; but they never were there in winter, although their wood had the name of Winterdown. It was a lovely wood; broad leaved arums, and primroses, and violets blue and white, covered the ground in spring; in summer there were hundreds and hundreds of glow-worms there, and the old tree-trunks were wreathed with ivy and honeysuckle. It was a very plea-

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sant wood, and near to it the poet's children were born; they had wandered in it and gathered its flowers, and admired its glow-worms, and listened to the turtle-doves when they were young; now, however, their home was nearer London; they only went to Winterdown about once a year for a great holiday. The old turtle-doves talked about the poet's children in Winterdown, and the young doves fancied that they lived there always.

It was now the time for them to set off on their long journey; the old pairs had exercised their young ones, and they were sure they could perform the journey. Next morning early they were to set off.

All night there was a light burning in the young musician's chamber, and towards morning the most heavenly music sounded from the window, which the old monk had opened a very little for fresh air, because his young friend complained of the room being close and hot. The sound woke the doves; they sat and listened to what they still thought to be a glorious bird: the old monk sate with his feeble hands together and head raised; it was the first time for years that he

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had ever sat so; the young man played; a heavenly joy was in his soul; he knew not whether he was in heaven or on earth; all his pain was gone. It was a blissful moment; the next moment and all was still in the chamber—wonderfully still. The lamp still burned; a soft breeze blew in from the half-opened window, and just stirred the old man's Carmelite frock, and lifted the young man's dark locks, but they neither of them moved.

"That glorious bird has done his singing for this morning," said the old doves; "he will now sleep—let us set off; all our friends and neighbors are off already; we have a long journey before us." The parent doves spread their wings; they and their elder one were away; the younger sate as if entranced in the nest; he could think of nothing but the glorious bird that had just been singing; his family wheeled round the cypresses and then returned for him; they bade him come, for it was late; that the sun was rising above the sea, and that all the doves of Carmel were ready for flight. The younger dove spread his wings also for this long journey,

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bearing with him still the remembrance of that thrilling music which affected him so greatly.

The turtle-doves were forth on their long journey. The young musician and the little old monk had started before them on one much longer.

It was the end of March; the poet's garden was beginning to be beautiful; the daffodils were out in great bunches; the polyanthuses stood on their round green cluster of leaves like bright-headed pins on a lady's pincushion; the jonquils had burst their dry delicate spathes, and were ready to open their lovely fragant cups to the sun; the hyacinths were just bursting forth also, whilst upon the old wall shone out like radiant gems the intense scarlet flowers of the pyrus-japonica; the air was fragrant with violets, and the lilacs and westeria were beginning to show their profuse wealth of flowers; the little clustered buds on the tops of the elm-trees looked in the sunshine as if cut out of coral; the roses were full of young shoots, some green and some red; and the peony pierced

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the mould with its dark crimson leaves folded up, as yet, like so many blunt-headed spears. The old blackbird had a mate, and he was singing to her with all his might; the rooks had forgotten all their winter troubles, and were now busy building and quarreling. It was a true spring morning, and the poet's children walked hand in hand up and down the garden laying out great plans for the future of this summer.

Just then, the weary turtle-doves of Carmel had reached England; the flock that had set out first had all come safely; they now, however, were very weary and hungry; the young turtle that loved the music so much was the weakest and most wearied of all the flock. "We have not far to go," said the mother, as it lagged behind and seemed ready to faint; "in an hour we shall be at Winterdown;" the little turtle grew fainter and fainter; just then they passed over the poet's garden, where the poet's children were walking. "There they are," said the mother, "the poet's children with their loving eyes and their golden hair; we shall

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be at Winterdown in less than an hour; follow me!"

The weary camel in the desert when it perceives water afar off, although faint and ready to sink the moment before, bounds forward in hope and joy for the promised relief —so it was with the flock of doves; soaring above the outskirts of London, they saw in the distance the old favorite woods of Surrey, towards which they winged their way with impatient delight.

The weary young turtle sank down among the rose-trees, and heard the voices of the children as they went by. In the evening, they saw what they thought a white pigeon, on a young pear tree; they were so pleased that they even dreamed about it. Next day, the young turtle was still there; so hungry and frightened, and feeling so forlorn and friendless. The children again saw it; this made them happier still; it must be come to live with them; they stole up softly to the tree where it sat, and the little trembling bird allowed itself to be caught. They rushed into the house; they had caught, they said, the white pigeon that was so beau

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tiful and yet so unlike their own old ones. "It shall live with us; it shall love us; it shall have a mate and be so happy," said the children.

For the first time since it had left Carmel it had now plenty to eat. It put its head behind its wings and slept calmly for hours.

The poor little turtle-dove, however, was unhappy, though no one knew it; it looked out of the bars of its large cage, and longed for the freedom of Mount Carmel and the long-talked-of breezy heights of Winterdown. It could not understand the nature of the wicker bars which enclosed it. It thought of free flight in the blue heavens, and fluttered from side to side of its cage.

The little turtle-dove was sick at heart: it wanted it knew not what; but a something which was beyond its reach. It understood not the loving eyes of the children; it wanted space, freedom, and companionship, but not in a cage!

The next day was Sunday. The turtle's cage stood in a boudoir; it looked beautiful in the window among the flowering camellias. Before it stood an alabaster vase; the

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picture of a young lovely girl looked down, as if from the wall, in tenderness upon it; books were there behind gilded wire-work; all was bright and beautiful. This little boudoir opened into the drawing-room, where a youth was playing some grand sacred music; the dove flew from side to side of the cage; somebody heard him, and said the poor bird wants to get out, he sees the day-light through the window; so they put down the Venetian blind, and a soft green gloom, as of a wood in sunshine, filled the room. The youth continued to play; and the poet's children came in to listen also; nobody but them thought more of the dove. "The dove does not like it," said they to each other, for the dove was more to them than the music; "it distresses him; it is no use telling them not to play; but, oh! how unhappy he is! Let us take him and hang him in our room; it is so quiet there."

They hung his cage in their pretty room; called him the sweetest names they could think of, and went down to listen to the beautiful music. But they could not forget the dove. In less than an hour they stole up

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stairs; the room was dusk, and the bird was calm and still; they thought he slept; and they closed the door softly, lest they should wake him. The next time they looked at him he was just in the same place; they mounted on a chair, peeped into the cage, and then they knew the truth. His little life, like that of the young musician and the old monk of Carmel, had passed away on the spiritual wings of harmony.

Life is a strange riddle; and all that I have told you of the little turtle-dove is quite true.

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Turtle Dove of Carmel. p. 22

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THE JOY OF ENGELE.

HAT ENGELE'S baptismal name was, I am sorry I cannot tell you. Her parents knew, no doubt, and so did her grandmother, but I never heard of anybody else who did. Engele she was called, and I'll tell you why. Her father was a painter, and his name was Paul; he painted the most beautiful pictures that ever were seen: he painted angels, and the Virgin Mary, and little Jesus, and all kinds of beautiful saints, with white lilies in their hands. He was a sort of strong, good angel himself: he had a grave, but loving counte-

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nance; his hair, which was of a deep brown, hung down in rich waves on his shoulders, and he had a handsome short beard and moustache. It was quite a picture to see him in his dark painting gown, and black velvet cap, standing before his easel, and working out some heavenly picture in which his wife and child always made a part. I wish you could have seen Engele's mother! but as you cannot, I will tell you how she looked. She was young, and had more of the peasant in her than the lady; she was not rich, you must understand; both husband and wife were peasant born; and though they had come to live in the city because he was a painter, they still both of them were as simple in their lives as when they were little children in the village together. The child was called Engele, because almost ever since she was born she had served as the model for her father's angels. When she was a baby, swaddled up in baby clothes, she had served for the new-born Jesus on his mother's knee, the Virgin always being the sweet mother of Engele; as she grew older, she stood, and sate, and slept,

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for every kind of angel, and so she gained the name of *Engel* or Angel. They called her, however, Engelein or little Angel, and this they shortened in their own old-fashioned dialect into Engele—and that was the reason of her name.

Engele was now seven; she was quite too old for the new-born Jesus, or the infant Jesus. She would soon be a model for St. Catherine, and such like saints, now she was useful for young John the Baptists. Nothing pleased Engele better than to be her father's model; she stood for hours and hours to him; he always talked so cheerfully when he was painting; and her mother used mostly to sit at her work in the room, and often at her spinning. Often her mother sang; and sometimes, when Engele was very much tired, her father would take his violin out of its case, to play to her and her mother while she rested.

Engele lived in a little German city; I have forgotten its name, but you might find it on the map, because there is a university in it; if I remember the name I'll tell you. She had no companions except her parents

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and her old grandmother, and the student Berthold, who lodged at her grandmother's. Berthold was a great friend of her father's, and used often to come to his studio, and that made her feel always at home with him.

One day Engele heard her parents talking about her father's grand picture which he had been many years in painting, and in which she herself had been the model of the new-born Jesus, and then, before the picture was finished, of the eldest of the little angels, as well as of the intermediate ones. She heard them talking about how this picture was gone somewhere, a long way off, for the king to see; and perhaps it would get a gold medal; and if the king bought it, then her father would be rich, and would be able to take them all to Italy for him to study beautiful pictures there. Engele listened to all this, and because she saw that her parents were anxious about the picture, she prayed every night when she went to bed, that God would make the great people admire her father's picture; but she prayed in such a low whisper, that nobody knew anything about it..

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Another thing she heard her father and mother talking of one day; and of it she thought a great deal. She was lying as a sleeping angel for her father, and he thought she really was asleep, so he and her mother talked freely. They said it was very inconvenient now Engele was getting so big, because her father had no very young model to paint from. He wished so much that they had a baby for a model. The mother sighed, and the father sighed, and then they both were silent for some time, and nothing was heard but the clock ticking and the buzzing of the mother's wheel.

"It is a pity Engele grows so tall," again said the father; "she made such a beautiful model for a baby; I always sold my pictures," said he, "when I had a baby to paint."

"Engele does certainly grow very tall," said the mother; and then all again was still.

This conversation, trifling as it was, made Engele very sad; she wished so much that she could turn herself into a baby again. At night she prayed that somehow or other

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a baby might come into the house for her father to make lovely pictures with.

The painter and his wife were very cheerful people; there was a deal of love and joy in their house; but for all that at the bottom of her heart Engele was sad. She wished so much for a baby that her father might paint it. She was surprised, after what she had heard her father say, that he should still want her as much as ever as a model; but though now he never painted her as a baby, still she came into every one of his pictures; she was glad of that, glad that she could be useful in any way; but still she was sorry that she could not be that which he wanted most.

Engele had, as we said, a grandmother. She lived just at the other end of the little city, so that Engele had to go from one city gate to the other to visit her. The only times that Engele went out a-visiting was to her grandmother. Her grandmother was lame, and often had the toothache, so she walked with a stick, and always had a handkerchief tied under her chin and on the top of her head to keep her jaws warm.

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She was a very nice old woman for all that; and she had such beautiful old-fashioned Dresden china in a cupboard with a glass door, and brown squab mandarins that put out their tongues and nodded their heads, and always made Engele laugh; and she had a cuckoo clock in her house. And the student Berthold, who lodged with her, and was a great friend of the painter, he used to play on the guitar and sing such funny songs! Engele was always glad to go to her grandmother's.

Besides the student Berthold, who lodged at the old woman's, six of the oldest boys at the Gymnasium, which was just by, used to come in every day to have their dinners with her; so she had enough to do with cooking for them all, and with her rheumatism, which made her so lame; and that was the reason why she did not very often go across the city to her son's.

One day, when Engele was there, she heard the old woman say to the student Berthold: "Yes, and when the baby comes my son will do famously; he wants an infant

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model very much; Engele, you see, gets too big for that!"

The student was smoking with a long pipe, on the bole of which was painted a beautiful copy of one of Paul's most beautiful pictures—Mary and Jesus—the models of which had been his own wife and Engele. Engele's eyes were fixed on this as the grandmother spoke. The student said nothing, for he was in a pleasant dream over the fumes of his tobacco; but Engele lost not a word. Was there really, then, a baby coming for her father to paint? It was a strange thought; she could not get it out of her head all day; but she said nothing to any one.

When she got home she could not help looking at all her father's pictures that had young children in them. Such an indescribable love sprang up in her heart for the baby that was coming, and that would be like these, that it seemed to her as if she were already possessed of a great treasure.

Her father had a very fine picture in hand; but as yet it was only an outline car-

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toon. He often said that that picture would establish his name; so said his wife, and so said the student Berthold. He only, however, worked at it now and then, on what he called his good days. One day he drew it forth; he seemed so happy, and the sun shone into the room, and fell upon his long hair, and made its brown tint almost golden. Engele could not help looking at her father; she thought he looked so like something in his own picture. He had two beautiful white lilies in his hand.

"I shall get on gloriously with my picture," said he, "when the baby comes! and then he stuck the two white lilies into his wife's hair, and kissed her, and said he would make a study of her head for his grand picture. She had only a grey woollen gown on of her own spinning, a black velvet bodice, which was in part the peasant's costume, a curiously worked leathern pocket outside her dress, and a little bunch of keys hung to a silver chain: but for all that she looked fit to be a great painter's wife.

Engele dreamt that night about her father's grand picture, and about a baby which

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lay on her mother's knee, and which he was painting; it was such a lovely dream, that she was quite sorry when her father woke her. He woke her very early; he told her to get up and dress herself, and go to spend the day with the old grandmother; he helped her to dress; he plaited her long thick hair, and tied it like a coronet round her head; he put on her little old-fashioned grey woollen frock, with its long waist and full skirts; pinned a little red shawl over her shoulders, and, opening the door which led into the street, told her to go straight to her grandmother's, and he would fetch her in the evening.

Engele had no bonnet on, because she never wore one; nobody but the rich did in that part of Germany, and her family were not rich, so neither she nor her mother wore bonnets. Engele walked all through the city, wondering why she must go so early to her grandmother. It was so early in the morning, that the watchman was only just coming out of the church, in the tower of which he had been keeping watch all night. He nodded kindly to Engele as she passed,

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and so did the country women, who were seating themselves in the street with their pitchers of sour milk, and their eggs and fruit, which they had brought, early as it was, into the town for sale.

Engele's grandmother did not seem at all surprised to see her; and when Berthold, the student, came in to his breakfast, and saw her there, he went up to the old woman, and asked, in a whisper, but loud enough for Engele to hear, if the baby were come.

The student never went to the University all that day; he played on his guitar, and showed Engele beautiful pictures in his books, and on his pipes, for he had a great many. Berthold was a rich student: he wore silver spurs, and rode upon a fine black horse. Engele often saw him on horseback; and when he met her anywhere when he was riding, he always took off his cap, as if she were a great lady. She thought Berthold a perfect gentleman; and besides, he was her father's great friend, and admired his pictures so much

Berthold dined at an inn; and the six

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gymnasium boys dined with Engele and her grandmother.

In the afternoon Berthold's fine horse was brought to the door for him to take a ride, and Engele's father came in just at that moment; he looked so handsome and so happy; he kissed the old woman, and said, "Well, thank Heaven! I shall get on gloriously with my picture now. I have now such a baby for a model as never was seen!" Tears were in the old grandmother's eyes, and she said, "Thank God!"

Engele was ready to cry for joy also; but she had no time; the student Berthold caught her in his arms, and kissed her, and said that she should ride before him on his fine black horse, and that he would set her down at her father's door as he went by.

I wish anybody could have seen Engele's face, as she rode up the street sitting before the student!

Instead, however, of going direct to the painter's house, he went down some back streets, and stopped at the post-office. Here they gave him some letters—one only of which he opened.

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"Here is good news for us, Engele," said he; "brave good news, and thou shalt take it to thy father. The king has bought his picture—they have conferred a gold medal upon him—and all the world will now acknowledge that he is a great painter!"

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MARIEN'S PILGRIMAGE.

A FIRESIDE STORY.

CHRISTIANITY, like a little child, goes wandering over the world. Fearless in its innocence, it is not abashed before princes, nor confounded by the wisdom of synods. Before it, the blood-stained warrior sheathes his sword, and plucks the laurel from his brow; —the midnight murderer turns from his purpose, and, like the heart-smitten disciple, goes out and weeps bitterly. It brings liberty to the captive, joy to the mourner, freedom to the slave, repentance and forgiveness to

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sinner, hope to the faint-hearted, and assurance to the dying.

It enters the huts of poor men, and sits down with them and their children; it makes them contented in the midst of privations, and leaves behind an everlasting blessing. It walks through great cities, amidst all their pomp and splendor, their unimaginable pride, and their unutterable misery, a purifying, ennobling, correcting, and redeeming angel.

It is alike the beautiful companion of childhood and the comfortable associate of age. It ennobles the noble; gives wisdom to the wise; and new grace to the lovely. The patriot, the priest, the poet, and the eloquent man, all derive their sublimest power from its influence.

Thanks be to the Eternal Father, who has made us one with Him through the benign Spirit of Christianity.

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PART I.

THROUGH the wide world went Marien,
On a holy mission sent,
A little child of tender years,
Throughout the world she went.

And ever as she went along,
Sweet flowers sprang 'neath her feet—
All flowers that were most beautiful,
Of virtues strong and sweet.

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And ever, as she went along,
The desert beasts grew tame;
And man, the savage, dyed with blood,
The merciful became.

Now, if you will attend to me,
I will in order tell
The history of this little child,
And what to her befel.

No friend at all had Marien,
And at the break of day,
In a lonesome place within the world,
In quiet thought she lay.

The stars were lost in coming morn,
The moon was pale and dim,
And the golden sun was rising
Over the ocean's rim.

With upturned eye lay Marien;—
"And I am alone," said she,
"Though the blackbird and the nightingale
Sing in the forest tree:

"Though the weak woodland creatures
Come to me when I call,
And eat their food from out my hand;
And I am loved by all:

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"Though sun, and moon, and stars come out,
And flowers of fairest grace,
And whate'er God made beautiful,
Are with me in this place:

"Yet I am all alone, alone,
Alone both night and day!
So I will forth into the world,
And do what good I may:

"For many a heart is sorrowful,
And I that heart may cheer;—
And many a weary captive pines
In dungeons dark and drear;—
And I the iron bonds may loose,—
Then why abide I here?

"And many a spirit dark with crime,
Yet longeth to repent;
And many a grievous wrong is done
To the weak and innocent;—
And I may do the injured right,
May save the penitent!

"Up, I will forth into the world!"
And, thus as she did say,
Sweet Marien from the ground rose up
And went forth on her way.

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Through the wood went Marien,
The thick wood and the green;
And not far had she travelled ere
A cruel sight was seen.

Under the green and leafy boughs
Where singing birds were set;
At strife about their heritage,
Two ruffian brothers met.

"Thou shalt not of our father's land,"
The elder said, "have part!"
The younger brother spoke no word,
But stabbed him to the heart.

Then deep into the forest dark
With desperate speed he ran,
And gentle Marien stood beside
The bleeding, murdered man.

With pitying tears that would not cease,
She washed his wounded side,
And prayed him to have faith in Him
Who for the sinner died.

But no sign made the murdered man,
There stiff in death he lay;—
And Marien through the forest wild
Went mourning on her way.

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Ere long, as she went wandering on,
She came to where there sat,
With folded arms upon her breast,
A woman desolate.

Pale was she as the marble stone,
And steadfast was her eye;
She sat enchained, as in a trance,
By her great misery.

"What ails thee, mother?" Marien said,
In a gentle voice and sweet;
"What aileth thee, my mother?"
And knelt down at her feet.

"What aileth thee, my mother?"
Kind Marien still did say:
And those two words, *my mother*,
To the lone heart found their way.

As one who wakeneth in amaze,
She quickly raised her head;—
And "Who is't calls me mother?"
Said she, "my child is dead!"

"He was the last of seven sons—
He is dead—I have none other;—
This is the day they bury him;—
Who is it calls me mother?"

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"'Tis I," said gentle Marien,
"Dear soul be comforted!"
But the woman only wrung her hands,
And cried, "My son is dead!"

"Be comforted," said Marien,
And then she sweetly spake
Of Jesus Christ, and how he came
The sting from death to take.

She told of all his life-long love,
His soul by suffering tried:
And how at last his mother stood
To see him crucified.

Of the disciples' broken hearts
She told, of pangs and pain;
Of Mary at the sepulchre,
And Christ arisen again.

"Then sorrow not," she said, "as though
Thou wert of all bereft;
For still though thy beloved are not,
This blessed faith is left,

"That when thy dream of life is o'er
Thou shalt embrace thy seven,
More beautiful than earthly sons,
With our dear Lord in heaven!"

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Down on her knees the woman fell,
And "blessed be God," said she,
"Who in my sorest need hath sent
This comforter to me!"

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PART II.

NOW Marien in the woman's house
Abode a little space,
And comfort to the mother came;
And a dear daughter's place
Had Marien in the woman's heart,
Doing the while a daughter's part.

But now 't was time that she must go,
For Marien's duty was not there,
Now grief was past and woe was done;
So with the rising of the sun,
She rose up forth to fare.

"Nay, bide with me," the woman said,
"Or, if as thou dost say,
Duty forbids that this may be,
I a day's journey go with thee,
To speed thee on the way."

So forth the loving pair set out,
The woman and the child;
And first they crossed the desert heath,
And then the mountains wild.

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And in the woman's arms she lay
That night within the forest hoar,
And the next morn with loving heart,
They said farewell, as those who part
To meet on earth no more.

Upon her way went Marien,
From morn till set of day,
And the peace of God that passeth word,
Upon her spirit lay;
And oftentimes she sang aloud
As she went on her way.

The joyfulest song sang Marien
That e'er left human tongue;
The very birds were mute to hear
The holy words she sung.

But now the darksome night came on,
And Marien lay her down
Within a little way-side cave,
On mosses green and brown.

And in the deepest hush of night
Rude robbers entered in;
And first they ate and drank, then rose
To do a deed of sin.

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For with them was a feeble man,
Whom they had robbed, and they
Here came to foully murder him,
And hide him from the day.

Up from her bed sprang Marien,
With heavenly power endued;
And in her glorious innocence,
Stood 'mong the robbers rude.

"Ye shall not take the life of man!"
Spake Marien low and sweet;
"For this will God take strict account,
Before his judgment seat!"

Out from the cave the robbers fled,
For they believed there stood,
A spirit stern and beautiful,
Not aught of flesh and blood.

And two from out the robber-band
Thenceforward did repent,
And lived two humble Christian men,
On righteous deeds intent.

When from the cave the robber-band
Had fled, the aged man
Rose from the floor where he was laid,
And marvelling much, began:

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"Who art thou, child? and those few words
Of might which thou hast spoken,
What may they be? My foes have fled—
And lo! my bonds are broken;—
At thy few words my foes have fled,
My rigid bonds have broken!"

Then Marien 'gan to tell him how,
Through her God's power had wrought;
And him from peril, nigh to death,
Thus wondrously had brought.

She told how holy Daniel's faith
The caged beasts disarmed;
How the three righteous children walked
Through raging fire unharmed.

She told how Peter, bound with chains,
Lay in the prison-ward,
How God's good angel freed him straight,
And the strong prison's iron gate
Oped of its own accord.

"God knows our wants," said Marien,
"And in our sorest need,
Puts forth his arm to rescue us,
For he is merciful, and thus
It is that thou art freed."

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"Let us go hence!" the old man said,
And o'er the forest sod,
They, hand in hand, with quiet steps,
Went forward praising God.

Ere noontide to a forest grange
They came, a sylvan place,
Where trooped, no longer fearing man,
The forest's native race,
The white doe and the antlered stag,
And every beast of chase.

'T was joy to see them drawing near
The old man as he came;
And this he stroked, and that he called
By some familiar name.

'T was joy unto the little child
This pleasant place to see;
"This is my home," he said, "and here
Thou shalt abide with me."

"I have no child to be mine heir,
And I am growing old;—
Thou shalt be heir of all my lands,
And heir of all my gold.

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"Thou shalt be comfort to mine age,
And here within this wood,
'Mongst faithful, gentle things, shalt thou
Grow up to womanhood!"

There dwelt the loving Marien;
Within the forest wild,
And she unto the lone old man
Was dearer than a child.

There dwelt the loving Marien;
Yet not long dwelt she there;
The old man died;—and then came forth
A kinsman for the heir.

A lean and rugged man of pelf
In wickedness grown old;
From some vile city den he came
And seized upon the gold;—
He slew the tamed forest-beasts,—
The forest-grange he sold.

And with hard speeches, coarse and rude,
Away the child he sent:
Meek Marien answered not a word,
But through the forest went.

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PART III.

THROUGH the wild wood went Marien,
For many a weary day;
Her food the forest-fruits, and on
The forest-turf she lay.

The wildern wood was skirted
By moorlands dry and brown;
And after them came Marien
Into a little town.

At entrance of the little town
A cross stood by the way,
A rude stone cross, and there she knelt
A little prayer to say.

Then on the stone steps sate her down;
And soon beside her crept,
A pale child with a clasped book,
And all the while she wept.

"Why weep you, child," asked Marien,
"What troubleth you so sore?"
At these words spoken tenderly,
The child wept more and more.

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"I have not heard," at length he said,
"Kind words this many a year,
My mother is dead—and my father
Is a hard man and severe.

"I sit in corners of the house
Where none can see me weep;
And in the quiet of the day
'T is here I often creep.

"The kid leaps by his mother's side,
The singing birds are glad:
But when I play me in the sun,
My heart is ever sad.

"They say this blessed book can heal
All trouble, and therefore
All day I keep it in my sight;
I lay it 'neath my head at night,
But it doth bring no cure to me:—
I know not what the cause may be
For I of learning have no store!"

Thereat, like to a broken flower
The child drooped down his head;
Then Marien took the clasped book
And of the Saviour read.

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She read of him the humble child
Of poverty and scorn;
How holy angels sang for him
The night that he was born.

How blessed angels came from heaven
To hail that Christmas night
And shepherd people with their flocks
Beheld the glorious sight.

Then read she how a growing youth,
His parents he obeyed,
And served with unrepining will
St. Joseph at his trade.

Then how he grew to man's estate
And wandered up and down,
Preaching upon the lone sea-side,
And in the busy town.

Of all his tenderness, his love,
Page after page she read;
How he made whole the sick, the maimed,
And how he raised the dead.

And how he loved the children small,
Even of low degree;
And how he blessed them o'er and o'er,
And set them on his knee.

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When this the little child had heard
He spoke in accents low,
"Would that I had been one with them
To have been blessed so!"

"Thou shalt be blessed, gentle one!"
Said Marien kind and mild,
"Christ, the Great Comforter, doth bless
Thee, even now, poor child!"

So conversed they of holy things
Until the closing day;
Then Marien and the little child
Rose up to go their way.

As to the town they came, they passed
An ancient church, and "here
Let us go in!" the pale child said,
"For the organ pealeth over head,
And that sweet strain of holy sound
Like a heavenly vesture wraps me round,
And my heavy heart doth cheer."

So Marien and the little child
Into the church they stole;
And many voices rich and soft
Rose upward from the organ loft,

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And the majestic instrument
Pealed to an anthem that was sent
To soothe a troubled soul.

Anon the voices died away,
The pealing organ ceased,
And through the church's ancient door
Passed chorister and priest.

And Marien and the little child
Went forward hand in hand
Adown the chancel isle, and then
At once they made a stand.

Over the altar hung a piece
With holy influence fraught,
A work divine of wondrous skill
By some old painter wrought.

The gracious Saviour breathing love,
Was there like life expressed,
And round his knees the children small
Were thronging to be blessed.

Down dropped the child upon his knees,
And weeping, tenderly,
Cried, "Bless me also, poor and weak,
Or let me go to thee!"

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Anon his little head dropped low,
And his white lips 'gan to say,
"Oh kiss me gentle one, for now
Even I am called away—
The blessed mother's voice I hear,
It calleth me away!"

So died the child;—and Marien laid
His meek arms on his breast.
With the claspèd book between his hands;—
Thus God had given him rest!

And Marien, weeping holy tears,
Sate down beside the dead,
And slept that night within the church,
As in a kingly bed.

Scarce from the church had Marien passed,
When came the father there,
As was his wont, though fierce and bad,
To say a morning prayer.

Not seven paces had he gone,
When, heart-struck, he surveyed
Before his feet, that little child
In his dead beauty laid.

At once as by a lightning stroke
His softened soul was torn

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With a deep sense of all the wrong
That little child had borne.

And then came back the timid voice,
The footstep faint and low,
The many little arts to please,
The look of hopeless woe,
And many a shuddering memory
Of harsh rebuke and blow.

No prayer of self-approving words,
As was his wont, he said,
But humbled, weeping, self-condemned,
He stood before the dead.

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PART IV.

TEN long days' travel Marien went,
O'er woodland and o'er wold,
Teaching and preaching by the way,
Like Jesus Christ of old.

Sometimes within the Baron's hall
A lodging she would find,
And never went she from the door
But blessings staid behind;
Proud foes forgiven, revenge withheld,
And plenteous peace of mind.

With shepherd people on the hills;
With toiling peasant men,
She sate; with women dwelling lone,
On mountain or in glen.

By wayside wells she sate her down,
With pilgrims old and bent;
Or, hand in hand, with children small,
To the village school she went.

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She made them spare the singing birds
All in their leafy bowers;
She made them love all living things;
And praise God for the flowers.

But now she came to where there raged
Wild war throughout the land;
She heard the vexèd people's cry;
She saw the ravaged corn-fields lie;
The hamlets smoking to the sky;
And everywhere careering by
The spoiler's savage band.

All hearts were changed. Like rav'ning wolves
Men preyed upon each other;
Dead children lay on the bloody mould;
And pitiless had grown, and cold,
The heart of many a mother.

Wild shouts and horrid shrieks around
Filled all the air; the earth
Reeked with the blood that had been spilt;
And man made mockery and mirth
Of agony and mortal woe:—
Yet through all this did Marien go.

Outraged of heart, the child went on,
Weeping upon her way;

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And now she soothed a dying wretch;
Then for another ran to fetch
Water; and every day
Did deeds of mercy, good and mild:—
Thus journeyed on the pitying child.

On went she,—and as she went on,
Men grew ashamed of blood,
So beautiful did mercy seem;
And the wild soldier rude
Slunk back as slinks a noisome beast;
And to their homes once more
Came mothers with their little ones;
And old men, weak and hoar,
Sate in the sun as they had wont,
Unfearing at their door.

On went the child,—and as she went,
Within the Baron's hall,
Were hung up helm and mail and sword,
To rust upon the wall.

On went she,—and the poets sung
No longer war's acclaim,
But holy hymns of love and joy,
To hail her as she came.

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On went she, like an angel good;
With bounding steps she went,
Day after day, until she came
To the great Conqueror's tent.

There sat he, a strong man of blood,
Steel-mailed and scarfed with blue,
Poring o'er charts of distant lands,
For new lands to subdue.

Beside him stood the gentle child;
And now he traced with care,
Measuring from river unto sea,
A fertile region fair.

"'Tis a good land," said Marien,
"From river unto sea:
And there a quiet people dwell,
Who never heard of thee.

"They feed their flocks and herds in peace;
The fruitful vine they till;
The quiet homes their fathers built
They and their children fill.

"Even now their happy children's joy
Thee and thy will condemn;
"Wherefore should'st thou possess that land?
God gave it unto them!"

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Into her face the proud man looked,
Amazed at what he heard;
Then turned unto his charts again,
And answered never a word.

Another land among the hills
He measured with his eye;
"'Tis a stern land," said Marien,
"A land of liberty!

"There fled the Christians in old time,
And built their churches there;
The bells upon the Sabbath morn
Call all that land to prayer.

"Would'st thou God's people tribulate?
A cursed thing it were
To make that Christian land of love
A bloody sepulchre!"
The proud man turned him round about
And fiercely gazed at her.

"Rivers of blood have flowed for thee!"
Unblenching Marien said,
"And many a Christian land hast thou
With Christian blood made red.

"Up, sin no more! 'Tis coming now,
The day thou canst not flee,

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When all the thousands thou hast slain
God will require of thee!

"Thou man of blood, repent, repent,
Repent whilst yet thou may,
And store up deeds of love and peace
Against that awful day!"

Up from his seat the conqueror rose,
And paced the uneasy tent,
And ground his teeth and groaned aloud
As one that doth repent.

Forth from the tent sped Marien;
And many a summer's day
Throughout a blessed land of peace
She journeyed on her way,

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PART V.

AT length, after long travel past,
She came as it grew late,
Along a beaten road, that led
To a vast city gate.

A vast and populous city, where
Rose dome and tower, and spire,
And many a gilded pinnacle,
Far-seen, as the bright sunset fell,
Like glittering points of fire.

A city vast and populous,
Whose thronging multitude
Sent forth a sound afar-off heard,
Strong as the ocean-flood.

A strong, deep sound of many sounds,
Toil, pleasure, pain, delight,
And traffic, myriad-wheeled, whose din
Ceased not by day or night.

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And through the city gate a throng
Passed ever, never spent;
A busy mingling human tide
Of those who came and went.

'Twas a proud city and a rich;
A city fair and old;
Filled with the world's most costly things,—
Of precious stones and gold;
Of silks, fine woods; and spiceries;
And all that's bought and sold.

Thither came homeless Marien,
Came there as it grew late,
Foot-sore and weary, friendless, poor,
Unto the city gate.

There found her a poor carpenter
Returning from his trade,
And he, with pitying countenance,
Her weary form surveyed.

"Come!" said he, "thou unto my house,
Shalt go: and of my bread,
And of my cup, thou shalt partake;
Shalt bide with me!" and as he spake
Her weary steps he led.

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Unto an humble place that stood
'Mong dwellings of the poor
He brought her; bade her welcome thrice
Unto his lowly door.

The good-wife met her with like cheer
"And though our fare is scant,
Fear not," she said, "whilst we have food
It is not thou shalt want!"

So dwelt she with this humble pair
In the great city; cherished so,
As parents cherish their first-born;
Nor would they let her go.

Thus for a year she dwelt with them;
And that while their abode
Was blessed exceedingly; their store
Grew daily, weekly, more and more;
And peace so multiplied around,
The very hearth seemed holy ground,
As if once more on earth was found
The Paradise of God.

'Twas she that blessed the bread they ate,
'Twas she soothed all their cares;
They knew not they entertained
An angel unawares.

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With simple hearts that had no guile
They of the Saviour heard;
And, weeping tears of joyful faith,
Believed and blessed each word.

No more they marvelled how their board
With plenteous food was spread;
Five barley loaves dispensed by Christ,
The famished thousands fed.

With love that would not be repressed,
Their kindling bosoms burned,
And 'mong their neighbors poor they went
To teach what they had learned.

To teach how Christ unto the poor,
The sinner vile, was sent;
How Mary washed his feet with tears,
And wiped them with her golden hairs,
And weeping penitent.

And how the sinful woman stood
Unjudged before his face;
How the poor prodigal sped back
Repentant to his place;

How to the thief upon the cross
He said, thou art forgiven,

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And thou shalt be with me this day,
In the paradise of Heaven.

So preached the carpenter; and men
Turned from their evil ways,
And Christian prayer was heard around,
And Christian hymns of praise.

Strange seemed these things; and to the rich,
And to the proud, 'twas told,
How many of the meaner sort
Lived like the saints of old.

How holy, blameless, were their lives;
And how poor craftsmen vile,
Amid their fellows, tool in hand,
The gospel preached the while.

'Twas told of Marien; how she came
A wanderer none knew whence;
Friendless and poor, of mind mature,
A child in innocence;
As thus 'twas told, some blessèd God,
But others took offence.

"Why," said they, "should this simple child,
These men of low degree,
Thus preach and practise? what new faith
Is there, or need there be

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"Bishops have taught a thousand years,
And learnèd men are they;
These are mad doctrines, false, unfit,
Devised to lead astray."

Therefore the simple people were
To a full synod brought,
To answer for their altered lives,
And for the faith they taught.

Much marvelled all those learnèd men
To see them fearless stand,
Calm, unabashed; with ready wit,
And language at command.

And to their taunts of low estate,
They answered, "Let alone
All pride of rank; Christ chose the poor,
To make his gospel known.

"And what are we?—Immortal souls,
For whom Christ's blood was shed;
Children of one great sire, with ye,
Co-heirs of Immortality;
Alike you both in birth and death;
Alone our lot so differeth,
As God shall judge the dead!"

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Then were they questioned of old creeds;
By sophistries perplexed;
So that their artless lore might fail,
Their simple souls be vexed.

But they were steadfast in the faith
As taught the holy book;
And thence it was adjudged a crime
Upon its page to look.

And the grave synod rose in wrath,
And they were judged blasphemers dire,
And doomed, their daring heresies
To expiate in fire.

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PART VI.

SO perished, for their faith in Christ,
This righteous couple; for their foes
Beseeching pardon; blessing God
That they were reckoned among those
Worthy to die for Christ, whose place
Is with the Holiest face to face.

Beside the pile stood Marien
Weeping sad human tears,
Yet strenghening, comforting the while,
And soothing all their fears.

And as she spoke, her countenance
With heavenly lustre beamed,
And all around her youthful form
Celestial beauty streamed.

Men looked on her with wondering awe,
As on an angel's face,
And pity, and love, and sweet remorse,
In every heart had place.

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Throughout the city rang the tale
Of this divinest child;
And for her sake unto her faith
Many were reconciled.

Unto the synod came these things;
And "Here let her be brought,
To answer for herself," they said,
"And suffer as she ought."

As Christ among the doctors stood,
So she among these men,
Stern, rugged-browed, and deeply versed
In parchment and in pen;
Meekly she stood; when they reviled,
Reviling not again.

Yet with sweet words and argument,
Rather of love than lore,
She pleaded for the faith, as ne'er
Pled youthful tongue before.

All were amazed who heard her words;
And straightway spoke each one
Unto his neighbor, "Through this child
May mighty things be done!"

Then threatening words anon grew soft,
"And thou with us shalt go,"

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They said, "and with the poor and vile,
No longer suffer wo.

"Thou shalt be clothed in purple robes,
In gold and linen fine;
Shalt eat the daintiest food; shalt drink
The spirit-gladdening wine.

"And with us in proud palaces
A crowned queen shalt be;
Leave but these men, for they are poor,
And can do nought for thee!

"Behold the stake at which they burn—
The iron-rack behold—
Are these the men to make thee rich
With silver and with gold?

"Come with us, glorious Marien,
And in our places high,
We will exalt thee as a queen,
Will deck thee royally!"

"Nay," said sweet Marien, "as a queen
It is not I may bide;
I am not won with power nor gold,
Nor aught of human pride.

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"Who clothes the lilies of the field,
Will clothe me, even as they;
Who hears the ravens when they cry,
Will feed me day by day!"

But still the tempters kept with her;
And "Come away," they said,
And she unto a sumptuous dome
With royal pomp was led.

They showed her all that palace proud:
They showed her store of gold;
They told her of a hundred realms,
And wealth a hundred-fold.

"And all this shall be thine," they said,
"All this be thine, and more,
So thou wilt bind thyself to us,
And leave the weak and poor!

"Thou that art weak and poor thyself,
A crownèd queen shalt be!"
Said Marien, "In the wilderness
The Tempter came, and he
Offered to Jesus Christ such gifts
As now ye offer me!"

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Those rugged brows grew dark. "Come now
With us," they fiercely said,
"And see what never daylight saw,
The halls of dool and dread!"

Then unto chambers hidden, vast,
Mysterious, far from view,
They led her; there was set the rack,
The knotted cord, the screw,
And many a horrid instrument,
Whose dark ensanguined hue
Told of their purpose. "These," said they,
"Many strange wonders do!

"Look well; could'st thou endure these things?
Strong men have died ere now
Under their torment; men were they,
A little child art thou!"

Then Marien meekly answered, "What
God suffereth you to dare,
He, to whom darkness is as light,
Will strengthen me to bear!"

"Come onward yet," they said; and down
Damp, broken stairs they went;
Down, down to hidden vaults of stone,
Through vapors pestilent.

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And then with sullen iron keys
They opened doors of stone;
And heavy-chainèd captives there
They showed her, one by one.

Old, white-haired men; men middle-aged,
That had been strong of limb;
But each, now pallid, hollow-eyed,
Like spectres worn and dim.

And many, as the dull door oped,
Ne'er lifted up the head;—
Heart-broken victims of long pain,
Whose very hope was dead.

Others with feverish restlessness
Sprang up, and with quick cry,
That thrilled the hearer to the soul
Demanded liberty.

With bleeding heart went Marien on;
And her conductors spake,
"These are our victims; these await
The rack, the cord, the stake.

"And as these are, so shalt thou be,
If thou our will gainsay;
Accept our service, pride, and power;
Or, on this very day,

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Racked, prisoned, poor, and miserable,
Thou shalt be, even as they!"

Down on the floor sank Marien,
And "Oh, dear Lord," she cried,
"Assist thy poor and trembling one
This awful hour to bide;
Let me be strong to do thy will,
Like Him who bowed, and died!

They took her:—of that prison-house,
The secrets who may say?—
Racked, fettered, captived, in their power,
The gentle Marien lay;
Captive within their torture-halls
A long night and a day!

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PART VII.

THEN forth they brought her; gave her wine,
And pleasant food to eat;
And "rest thee, Marien, in our arms,"
Sung syren-voices sweet.

"Rest thee within our arms; refresh
Thy fainting soul with wine;
Eat and be glad; forget the past,
And make all pleasure thine!"

"Tempt me not!" said the feeble child,
"Take hence your spicèd bowl;
Is 't not enough to rack my limbs,
But you must vex my soul?

"Look at my flesh, which ye have torn;
Look at your bloody rack;—
Take hence your gifts, and let me go
To my own people back.

"To my own people let me go,
A bruised and broken reed;
I for your purpose am unmeet;
Let me go hence with speed!"

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So, in her weakness, prayed the child;
But those remorseless men,
More dead than living, bore her back
Unto their prison-den.

Into a noisome prison-house,
With iron-doors made fast,
'Mong felons and 'mong murderers,
Was gentle Marien cast.

Upon the hard, cold prison-floor
Sick unto death she lay,
As if God had forsaken her,
For many a weary day.

She thought of her sweet forest life,
And of those creatures small,
Weak, woodland creatures, tamed by love,
That came unto her call.

She thought of him, the forest-lord,
And of the forest-grange;
Of the delicious life she led,
With liberty to range.

And as she thought, even as a child's,
The ceaseless tears did flow,
For torturing pain and misery
Had brought her spirit low.

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When one from out the felon-band
Came softly to her side,
And "do not weep, thou little child!"
With pitying voice, he cried.

"At sight of thee, I know not why,
My softened heart doth burn,
And the gone tenderness of youth
Doth to my soul return.

"I think upon my early days,
Like unto days of heaven;
And I, that have not wept for years,
Even as a child, shed ceaseless tears,
And pray to be forgiven!"

"Blessèd be God!" said Marien,
And rose up from the floor;
"I was not hither brought in vain!
His mercy I adore,
Who out of darkness brought forth light!"
And thus she wept no more.

But ever of the Saviour taught;
How he came down to win,
With love, and suffering manifold,
The sinner from his sin.

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How, not to kings and mighty men
He came, nor to the wise,
But to the thief and murderer,
And those whom men despise.

And how, throughout the host of heaven,
Goes yet a louder praise
O'er one poor sinner who doth turn
From his unrighteous ways,
Than o'er a hundred godly men,
Who sin not all their days.

Thus with the felons she abode,
And that barred prison rude
Was as if angels dwelt therein,
And not fierce men of blood;
For God had her captivity
Turned into means of good.

Now all this while sweet Marien's friends,
Who in the town remained,
Of her took painful thought, resolved
Her freedom should be gained.

And at the last they compassed it,
With labor long and great;
And through the night they hurried her
Unto the city-gate.

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There many a mother stood and child,
Weeping with friendly woe,
Thus, thus to weep, as 't were from death,
And then to bid her go.

To bid her go, whom so they loved,
Nor once more see her face;
To bid her go; to speed her forth
To some more friendly place.

Thus, amid blessings, prayers, and tears,
About the break of day,
She left the city, praising God
For her release, and swiftly trod
Upon her unknown way.

PART VIII.

A BOW-SHOT from the city-gate
Turned Marien from the plain,
Intent by unfrequented ways
The mountain-land to gain.

With bounding step she onward went,
Over the moorland fells;
O'er fragrant tracks of purple thyme,
And crimson heather-bells.

Joyful in her release she went,
Still onward yet, and higher;
Up many a mossy, stony steep,
Through many a flock of mountain sheep,
By the hill-tarns so dark and deep,
As if she could not tire.

Onward and upward still she went
Among the breezy hills,
Singing for very joyfulness
Unto the singing rills.

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The days of her captivity,
The days of fear and pain,
Were past, and now through shade and shine,
She wandered free again.

Free, like the breezes of the hill,
Free like the waters wild;
And in her fulness of delight,
Unceasingly from height to height
Went on the blessèd child.

And ever when she needed food,
Some wanderer of the hill
Drew forth the morsel from his scrip,
And bade her eat her fill.

For He who fed by Cherith-brook
The prophet in his need,
Of this his wandering little one
Unceasingly had heed.

And ever when she needed rest,
Some little cove she found,
So green, so sheltered, and so still,
Upon the bosom of the hill,
As angels girt it round.

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Thus hidden 'mong the quiet hills
Alone, yet wanting nought,
She dwelt secure, until her foes
For her no longer sought.

Then forth she journeyed. Soon the hills
Were of more smooth descent;
And downward now, and onward still,
Toward the sea she went.

Toward the great sea for many days;
And now she heard its roar;
Had sunlit glimpses of it now,
And now she trod the shore.

A rugged shore of broken cliffs,
And barren wave-washed sand,
Where only the dry sea-wheat grew
By patches on the strand.

A weary way walked Marien
Beside the booming sea,
Nor boat, nor hut, nor fisherman,
Throughout the day saw she.

A weary, solitary way;
And as the day declined
Over the dark and troubled sea
Arose a stormy wind.

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The heavy waves come roaring in
With the strong coming tide;
The rain poured down, and deep dark night
Closed in on every side.

There stood the homeless Marien,
With bare, unsandaled feet;
And on her form, with pitiless force,
The raging tempest beat.

Clasping her hands, she stood forlorn,
"In tempest, and in night:"
She cried "Oh Lord, I trust in thee,
And thou wilt lead me right!"

Now underneath a shelving bank
Of sea-driven sand, there stood
A miserable hut, the home
Of a poor fisher good.

Whose loving wife but yesternight
Died in his arms, and he,
Since that day's noon alone had been
Casting his nets at sea.

At noon he kissed his little ones,
And would be back, he said,
Long ere night closed; but with the night
Arose that tempest dread.

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It was an old and crazy boat,
Wherein the man was set,
And soon 't was laden heavily
With many a laden net.

"Oh sorrow, sorrow!" groaned he forth,
As rose the sudden squall,
Thinking upon the mother dead,
And on his children small.

"Oh sorrow, sorrow!" loud he cried,
As the helm flew from his hand,
And he knew the boat was sinking
But half a league from land.

"Oh sorrow, sorrow!" as he sank,
Was still his wailing cry:
And Marien heard amid the storm,
That voice of misery.

Now all this while the children small
Kept in their dreary place,
Troubled and sad, and half afear'd
Of their dead mother's face.

And when, to while the time, they played
With shells beside the door,
They found they had not hearts for mirth,
And so they played no more.

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Yet keeping up with forced content
Their hearts as best they might,
Still wishing afternoon were gone,
And it was only night.

But when, hour after hour went on,
And the night-tempest black
Raged o'er the stormy sea, and still
The father came not back;

It would have touched a heart of stone
To see their looks of fear—
So young and so forlorn;—their words
Of counsel small to hear.

And now they shouted through the storm;
And then with better wit,
As they had seen their mother do,
A fire of wood they lit,
That he might see the light afar,
And steer his boat by it.

Unto this light came Marien;
And ere her weary feet
Had reached the floor, the children ran
With eager arms to meet
Their loving father, as they thought,
And give him welcome sweet.

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Alas! the father even
Had run his mortal race;
But God had sent this comforter
To fill his earthly place.

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PART IX.

WO'S me, what secret tears are shed,
What wounded spirits bleed;
What loving hearts are sunderèd,
And yet man takes no heed!

He goeth on his daily course,
Made fat with oil and wine,
And pitieth not the weary souls
That in his bondage pine;
That turn for him the mazy wheel;
That delve for him the mine!

And pitieth not the children small,
In noisy factories dim,
That all day long, lean, pale, and faint,
Do heavy tasks for him!

To him they are but as the stones
Beneath his feet that lie:
It entereth not his thoughts that they
From him claim sympathy.

It entereth not his thoughts that God
Heareth the sufferer's groan,

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That in His righteous eye, their life
Is precious as his own.

This moves him not. But let us now
Unto the fisher's shed,
Where sat his weeping little ones
Three days beside the dead.

It was a solitary waste
Of barren sand, which bore
No sign of human dwelling-place
For miles along the shore.

Yet to the scattered dwellers there
Sped Marien, and besought
That of the living and the dead
They would take Christian thought.

So in the churchyard by the sea
The senseless dead was laid:
"And now what will become of us!"
The weeping children said.

"For who will give us bread to eat?
The neighbors are so poor!
And he, our kinsman in the town,
Would drive us from his door.

"For he is rich and pitiless,
With heart as cold as stone!

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Who will be parents to us now
That ours are dead and gone?"

"Weep not," said faithful Marien,
Man's heart is not so hard,
But it your friendless misery
Will tenderly regard!

"And I with you will still abide
Your friendless souls to cheer,
Be father and mother both to you;
For this God sent me here.

"And to your kinsman in the town,
Who hath such store of gold,
I will convey you: God can change
His spirit stern and cold.

"And ye, like angels of sweet love,
From earth his soul may win.
Fear not; and we with morning light
The journey will begin."

They took their little worldly store;
And at the break of day,
Leaving the lonesome sea-side shed,
Set out upon their way.

'Mong sandy hills their way they wound;
O'er sea-grass dusk and harsh;

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By many a land-mark lone and still;
Through many a salt-sea marsh.

And thus for twice seven days they went
A little, loving band,
Walking along their weary way
Like angels, hand in hand.

And everywhere kind Christian folks
They found, as Marien said,
Who gave them lodging for the night,
And gave them daily bread.

And thus they pilgrimed, day by day,
Alone, yet not cast down,
Strengthened by Marien's company,
Unto the sea-port town.

A busy town beside the sea,
Where men were all astir,
Buying and selling; eager-eyed,
Two different races, yet allied,—
Merchant and mariner.

A place of ships, whose name was known
Far off beyond the main;
A busy place of trade, where nought
Was in repute but gain.

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Thither they came, those children poor,
About the eventide;
And where dwelt he, their kinsman rich,
They asked on every side.

After long asking, one they found,
An old man and a poor,
Who undertook to lead them straight
Unto the kinsman's door.

But ever as he went along
He to himself did say,
Low broken sentences, as thus,
"Their kinsman!—well-a-way!"

All through a labyrinth of walls
Blackened with cloudy smoke,
He led them, where was heard the forge
And the strong hammer's stroke.

And beneath lofty windows dim
In many a doleful row,
Whence came the jangle of quick looms,
Down to the courts below.

Still on the children, terrified,
With wildered spirits passed;
Until of these great mammon halls,
They reached the heart at last,—
A little chamber hot and dim,
With iron bars made fast.

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There sate the kinsman, shrunk and lean,
And leaden-eyed and old,
Busied before a lighted lamp
In sealing bags of gold.

The moment that they entered in,
He clutched with pallid fear
His heavy bags, as if he thought
That sudden thieves were near.

"Rich man!" said Marien, "ope thy bags
And of thy gold be free,
Make gladsome cheer, for Heaven hath sent
A blessing unto thee!"
"What!" said the miser, "is there news
Of my lost Argosy?"

"Better than gold, or merchant-ships,
Is that which thou shalt win,"
Said Marien, "thine immortal soul
From its black load of sin."

"Look at these children, thine own blood,"
And then their name she told;
"Open thine heart to do them good,
To love them more than gold;—
And what thou givest will come back
To thee, a thousand-fold!"

"Ah," said the miser, "even these
Some gainful work may do.

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My looms stand still; of youthful hands
I have not half enow;
I shall have profit in their toil;
Yes, child, thy words are true!"

"Thou fool!" said Marien, "still for gain,
To cast thy soul away!
The Lord be judge 'twixt these and thee
Upon his reckoning day!

"These little ones are fatherless,—
He sees them day and night;
And as thou doest unto them,
On thee he will requite!"

"Gave I not alms upon a time?"
Said he with anger thrilled;
"And when I die, give I not gold,
A stately church to build?

"What would'st thou more? my flesh and blood
I seek not to gainsay.
But what I give, is it unmeet
Their labor should repay!"

So saying, in an iron chest,
He locked his bags of gold,
And bade the children follow him,
In accents harsh and cold.

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PART X

OH leave us not sweet Marien!"
The little children spake;
"For if thou leave us here, alone,
Our wretched hearts will break."

She left them not—kind Marien!
And in a noisome room,
Day after day, week after week,
They labored at the loom.

The while they thought with longing souls
Upon the breezy strand,
The flying shuttles, to and fro,
Passed through each little hand.

The while they thought with aching hearts,
Upon their parents dear,
The growing web was watered,
With many a bitter tear.

And the sweet memory of the past,—
The white sands stretching wide;
Their father's boat wherein they played,
Upon the rocking tide;

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The sandy shells; the sea-mew's scream;
The ocean's ceaseless boom;
Came to them like a troubling dream,
Within the noisy loom.

Wo-worth those children, hard bestead,
A weary life they knew;
Their hands were thin; their cheeks were pale,
That were of rosy hue.

The miser kinsman in and out
Passed ever and anon;
Nor ever did he speak a word,
Except to urge them on.

Wo-worth those children, hard bestead,
They worked the livelong day;
Nor was there one, save Marien,
A soothing word to say:—
So, amid toil and pain of heart,
The long months wore away.

The long, the weary months passed on,
And the hard kinsman told
Over his profits; every loom
Increased the hoard of gold;
"'Tis well!" said he, "let more be spun,
That more may yet be sold!"

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So passed the time; and with the toil
Of children weak and poor,
The sordid kinsman's treasure-hoards
Increased more and more.

But ere a year was come and gone,
The spirit of the boy
Was changed; with natures fierce and rude
He found his chiefest joy.

The hardness of the kinsman's soul
Wrought on him like a spell,
Exciting in his outraged heart,
Revenge and hatred fell;
The will impatient of control;
The spirit to rebel

Hence was there warfare 'twixt the two,
The weak against the strong;—
A hopeless, miserable strife,
That could not last for long:
How can the young, the poor, contend
Against the rich man's wrong!

The tender trouble of his eye,
Was gone; his brow was cold;
His speech, like that of desperate men,
Was reckless, fierce, and bold.

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No more he kissed his sister's cheek;
Nor soothed her as she wept;
No more he said at Marien's knee
His prayers before he slept.

But they, the solitary pair,
Like pitying angels, poured
Tears for the sinner; and with groans
His evil life deplored.

Man knew not of that secret grief,
Which in their bosoms lay;
And for the sinful brother's sin,
Yet harder doom had they.

But God, who trieth hearts; who knows
The springs of human will;
Who is a juster judge than man,
Of mortal good and ill;

He saw those poor despisèd ones,
And willed them still to mourn:
He saw the wandering prodigal,
Yet bade him not return.

In his good time that weak one's woe,
Would do its work of grace;
And the poor prodigal, himself,
Would seek the Father's face;—

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Meantime man's judgment censured them,
As abject, mean and base.

The erring brother was away,
And none could tell his fate:
And the young sister at the loom,
Sate drooping, desolate.

She mourned not for her parents dead,
Nor for the breezy shore:
And now the weary, jangling loom
Distracted her no more.

Like one that worketh in a dream,
So worked she day by day,
Intent upon the loving grief,
Which on her spirit lay;
And as she worked, and as she grieved,
Her young life wore away.

And they who saw her come and go,
Oft said, with pitying tongue,
"Alas, that labor is the doom,
Of aught so weak and young!"

Alone the kinsman pitied not;
He chid her, that no more
The frame was strong, the hand was swift,
As it had been before.

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—All for the child was dark on earth,
When holy angels bright
Unbarred the golden gates of heaven
For her one winter's night.

Within a chamber poor and low,
Upon a pallet bed,
She lay, and "hold my hand, sweet friend,"
With feeble voice she said.

"Oh, hold my hand, sweet Marien,"
The dying child spake low;
"And let me hear thy blessèd voice,
To cheer me as I go!

"'Tis darksome all—Oh, drearly dark!
When will this gloom pass by?
Is there no comfort for the poor,
And for the young who die!"

Down by her side knelt Marien,
And kissed her fading cheek,
Then of the loving Saviour,
In low tones 'gan to speak.

She told of Lazarus, how he lay,
A beggar mean and poor,
And died, in misery and want,
Beside the rich man's door.

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Yet how the blessèd angels came
To bear his soul on high,
Within the glorious courts of heaven,
On Abraham's breast to lie.

She told how children, when they die,
Yet higher glory win,
And see the Father face to face,
Unsoiled by tainting sin.

"Blessèd be God!" the child began,
"I doubt not, neither fear,
All round about the bed, behold,
The angel-bands appear!

"I go!—yet still, dear Marien,
One last boon let me win!—
Seek out the poor lost prodigal,
And bring him back from sin!

"I go! I go!"—and angels bright,
The spirit bare away:—
On earth 'twas darksome, dreary night,
In heaven 'twas endless day!

—And now, upon that self-same night,
Within a carvèd bed,
Lay the rich kinsman wrapped in lawn,——
With pillows 'neath his head.

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Scheming deep schemes of gold, he lay
All in that lordly room;
Blessing himself that he had stores
For many years to come.

Just then an awful form spake low,
A form that none might see:
"Thou fool, this very night thy soul
Shall be required of thee.

And when into that chamber fair,
Stole in the morning-ray,
A lifeless corpse, upon his bed,
The miser kinsman lay.

—Beside his door stood solemn mutes;
And chambers high and dim,
Where hung was pall, and mourning lights
Made show of grief for him.

Full fifty muffled mourners stood,
Around the 'scutcheoned bed,
That held the corse, as if, indeed,
A righteous man were dead.

Within a tomb, which he had built,
Of costly marble-stone,
They buried him, and plates of brass
His name and wealth made known.

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A coffin of the meanest wood,
The little child received;
And o'er her humble, nameless grave,
No hooded mourner grieved.

Only kind Marien wept such tears,
As the dear Saviour shed,
When in the house at Bethany
He mourned for Lazarus dead.

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PART XI.

NOW from the miser kinsman's house
Came many a jovial sound;
And lavish heirs had spent his gold,
Ere twelve months had gone round.

That while within the busy town
Dwelt Marien; and each day,
In some good deed of Christian love
And mercy, passed away.

For many an abject dweller there,
Grief-bowed and labor spent,
Groaned forth, amid his little ones,
To heaven his sad lament;
And unto such, to raise, to cheer,
The sent of God, she went.

But she who, even as they, was poor,
Failed not of daily bread;
stranger, many took her in,
And warmed, and clothed, and fed.

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And when a sickness sore befel,
And nigh to death she lay,
Kind hearts there were who came to her,
And watched her night and day.

And afterwards, when evil men
Doomed her in bonds to lie,
Many a true, noble friend arose.
Willing for her to die.

Oh, blessed Christian hearts, who thus
Unto this little one
Did deeds of love; for as to Christ
These righteous works were done!
And they who blessed her, for themselves,
A tenfold blessing won!

Thus dwelt sweet Marien in the town
For many a passing year,
Yet of the poor, lost prodigal
No tidings could she hear.

She found him not; but yet she found
Others who, even as he,
Had gone astray, and pined forlorn
In hopeless misery.

To these repentant, outcast ones,
She spake kind words of grace,

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And led them back, with yearning hearts,
To seek the Father's face;
To find forgiveness in His heart,
And love in His embrace.

Oh blessèd, blessèd Marien!
—But let us now recall
Whate'er had happed of change and woe
Unto the prodigal.

He saw his little sister pine;
He saw her silent woe;
He saw her strength decline, yet still
Her weary labor grow.

As this he saw, yet more and more
He hated that hard man,
With whom their cheerless misery,
Their daily tasks began.

And even to true Marien,
He bare an altered mind;—
Alas, that injuries should make
Else loving hearts unkind!

But so it is! and when the twain
To cheer his spirit strove,
His wrath arose, and he repelled
Their patient deeds of love.

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Then evil men assailed his youth;
And he who was so frail
In suffering, 'gainst the tempter's might
Was feeble to prevail.

He was their easy prey; their tool;
And bravely clothed and fed,
In desperate scenes, mid desperate men,
A lawless life he led.

Yet often to his soul came back
Sweet memory of the time,
When he, a happy, thoughtless child,
Had knowledge of no crime.

And like a heavier, wearier woe,
Than labor night and day,
The consciousness of evil deeds
Upon his spirit lay.

He thought of slighted Marien,
And of the sister meek;
Of the thin hands that plied the loom,
And of the fading cheek;
Yet how he had deserted them,
The faithful and the weak!

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He heard his loving parents' voice
Reproach him in his sleep;
And conscience, that stern bosom-guest,
Ceaseless upbraidings keep.

Yet, for the hated kinsman's sake,
Neither would he regard;
And, because man was hard to him,
Made his own nature hard.

Thus doing outrage to his soul,
By chance he went one day
Thro' the brown trodden church-yard, where
The little sister lay.

A sexton there at work he found;
And why he turned the mould
So carefully, he asked, since there
No name the tenant told.

Replied he, "In this wide church-yard
I know each separate mound;
Yet unto me that little grave
Alone seems holy ground."

And then he told of Marien,
And how she there had wept
Over the child, that 'neath the mould,
In dreamless quiet slept.

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"A little, friendless pauper child,
She lieth here," said he;
"Yet not a grave in all the ground
Like this affecteth me!"

Saying this, he wiped a tear aside,
And turnèd from the place;
And, in the skirts of his rich robe,
The brother hid his face.

He left the town; and in a ship,
Bound for a far-off strand,
He took his voyage; but distress
Pursued her from the land.

At first disease was 'mong her men;
And suffering long and sore,
In midst of joyless, suffering mates,
Forlorn and sad he bore.

Next mutiny brake forth; and then
That miserable ship,
As if there were no port for her,
Without a wind the sails to stir
Lay moveless on the deep.

As Jonah, fleeing from the Lord,
The soul-struck penitent

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Lay self-condemned, believing all
On his account were sent.

Anon a tempest rose, and drove
The ship before the gale,
For three long days, and bore away
Her rudder, mast and sail.

On the fourth night dark land appeared,
And the strained vessel bore
Right on the rocky reef, and lay
A wreck upon the shore.

At day-break only he remained
To note the vessel's fate;—
The Crusoe of a desert isle,
Abject and desolate.

—The world went on as it was wont;
And in the city street,
And in the busy market-place,
Did thronging thousands meet.

Upon the hearths of poor men's homes
Good neighbors met at night;
And kindness and companionship
Made woe and labor light.

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The loneliest hut among the hills
To human hearts was known;
And even in kingly palaces
Men might not dwell alone.

The world went on as was its wont;
And no man knew the while
Of that poor lonely prodigal,
Upon his lonely isle.

He clomb the cliffs to look afar
Over the distant sea;
If, please God, for his rescuing
A coming sail might be.

He lit his beacon fires at night;
He hoisted signals high;—
But the world went on as it was wont,
And not a ship sailed by.

He was not missed among his kind,—
Man had forgot his name;
But unto Him who cares for all,
Who sees the little sparrow fall,
His lonely misery came.

God saw him; saw his broken heart,
His cheerless solitude,

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Saw how his human pride was gone,
His human will subdued.

Saw him and loved him. Broken heart,
Look up! the Father's voice
Calleth thee from thy depths of woe,
And biddeth thee rejoice!

—Now Marien from the trading town
Had voyaged; sent of Heaven
She knew not whither: and the ship,
Which with long storm had striven,
At length upon a glorious isle
Amid the seas was driven;

Where dwelt a gentle race at rest
Amid their flowery wilds,
Unknown to all the world, with hearts
As simple as a child's.

With them abode sweet Marien;
But now it chanced one day,
As in a slender carvèd boat
Upon the shore she lay,
A strong wind came, and filled the sail,
And bare her thence away.

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She had no fear, true Marien;—
That God was good, she knew,
And even then had sent her forth
Some work of love to do.

The prodigal upon his rock
Was kneeling, and his prayer
For confidence in heaven, arose
Upon the evening air,
Just as the little boat approached
The island bleak and bare.

The boat ran up a creek, as if
'Twere steered by angels good;
And ere the evening prayer was done
Beside the youth she stood.

The chiefest joy it hath not words
Its deep excess to say;
And as if he had seen a sprite
His spirit died away.

Then with clasped hands and broken speech,
And tears that ceaseless flowed;
He pourèd forth from his full heart
A fervent praise of God.

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PART XII.

"BUT let us hence," said Marien;
And with the earliest morn,
Within the slender carvèd boat,
They left that isle forlorn.

A light breeze from the desert shore
Over the waters blew,
And the little boat sailed on before,
Till the isle was out of view.

As friends long parted, met once more,
They sat; and of times gone,
And of the blessèd dead conversed,
As the slender boat sailed on.

And as they sailed, sweet Marien
Over the Gospel bent,
And read of joy that is in heaven
O'er sinners that repent;

And of the weary prodigal
Returning bowed with shame,
And the good father hastening forth
To meet him as he came·

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And how he bade the fairest robe,
Be brought; the golden ring;
Shoes for the feet: and music sweet,
As if to hail a king.

"For this, my son," said he, "was dead,
And is alive; is found,
Who was long lost; 'tis meet, therefore,
That stintless joy abound!"

"Oh, child of woe," said Marien,
"Look up, for thou art he;
And round about the Father's throne
Many rejoice for thee!"

"Oh, Lord, I bless thee," said the youth,
"That of thy mercy great,
Thou hast vouchsafed to rescue me
From my forlorn estate!
And henceforth, to thy work of love
Myself I dedicate!

"The meanest of thy creatures, low
I bend before thy throne,
And offer my poor self to make
Thy loving-kindness known!

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"Oh, Father, give me words of power,
The stony hearts to move;
Give me prevailing eloquence,
To publish forth thy love!

"Thy love which wearieth not; which like
Thy sun, on all doth shine!
Oh, Father, let me worship Thee
Through life, by gladly serving Thee!
I love not life; I ask not wealth;
My heart and soul, my youth and health,
My life, oh, Lord, are thine!"

So spake the youth; but now the boat
The glorious island neared,
Which, like a cloudland realm of bliss,
Above the sea appeared.

Skyward rose sunny peaks, pale-hued,
As if of opal glow;
And crested palms, broad-leaved and tall,
In valleys grew below.

A lovely land of flowers, as fair
As Paradise, ere sin
And sorrow, that corrupting pair,
With death had entered in.

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A lovely land!—"And even now,"
Cried Marien, "see they come,
Children of love, my brother, now
To bid thee welcome home!

"For these, God kept thee in the wild,
From sinful men apart;
For these, his people, through distress
Made pure thy trusting heart!

"Thy work is here! Go forth, mid these
Meek children of the sun,
Oh, servant of the Lord, and tell
What He for thee hath done!"

Down to the shore thousands came,
A joyous, peaceful host,
To welcome Marien back, whom they
Had sorrowed for as lost.

"And welcome to thee, little child!"
They sang forth sweet and clear;
"And welcome to the stranger poor,
Who cometh with thee here!"

And then they brought him silken cloth,
Since he was meanly drest;
And juicy, mellow fruits to eat,
And perfumed waters for his feet,
And mats whereon to rest.

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And ever as they servèd him,
They sang forth sweet and low,
"Would this repose might solace thee,
These apples cure thy woe!"

And though the twain knew not their speech,
Yet well they understood
The looks of love that welcomed them,
Their actions kind and good.

With them for many a year abode
The youth, and learned their tongue;
And with the sound of Christian praise
The hills and valleys rung.

Oh beautiful, beyond all lands
That lay beneath the moon,
Was that fair isle of Christian love
Of Christian virtues boon.

A joyful people there they dwelt,
Unsuffering from their birth;
Of simplest life; benignly wise;
As angels on the earth.

And with them dwelt the holy youth,
Their chief, their priest, their friend,
Beloved and loving, for their sakes
Willing himself to spend.

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Like to some ancient church of Christ,
From worldly taint kept free,
Lay this delicious isle of love
Amid its summer sea.

But now the work he had to do
Was done; and ere his day
Approached its noon, his strength, his life,
Was wearing fast away.

They saw his cheek grow thin and pale;
His loving eye grow dim;
And with surpassing tenderness
They sorrowed over him.

Old men, and youths, and women meek,
And children wild and young,
Followed his steps with watchful care,
And weeping round him hung.

In flowery thickets of the hills,
Sad mourners knelt in prayer,
That God this servant so revered,
This friend beloved would spare.

And round about his feet they sat,
Observant, meek, and still,
To gather up his latest words,
To do his slightest will.

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Now all this while good Marien
Had wandered far and wide.
Through divers realms, for many a year,
The hand of heaven her guide.

And now unto the glorious isle
She came; but on the shore
She saw no wondering company,
As she had seen before.

'T was Sabbath eve, and o'er the isle
A solemn stillness lay;
A stillness, how unlike the calm
Of many a Sabbath day!

A hush, as of suspended breath,
Ere some great grief began;
For the mournful people silently
Stood round the dying man.

Through the still vales went Marien,
And came at length to where,
Mid flowering trees, knelt many a one
In agony of prayer.

Onward she went, not many steps,
With heart of mournful ruth,
When, like a dying angel laid,
She saw the holy youth.

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With closèd eyes and pallid lips
He lay, as one whose life
Meeteth with death, yet waiteth still
The last conflicting strife.

Beside him knelt she on the turf,
And spoke in accents low,
Words of strong love, which like new life
Seemed through the frame to go.

He raised himself, and blessing God,
That He of him had care,
And now in his dark trial-hour,
Had sent his angel there;

With low-toned voice, more musical
Than softest lute could make,
Looking upon his weeping friends
With fervent love he spake.

"Oh friends, belovèd friends! weep not,
Nor be oppressed with woe;
'T is of His will, who doeth right,
That I am called to go!

"Fain would I tarry, but the cry
Hath sounded in mine ear,
'Haste to depart, the Lord hath need
Of thee no longer here!'

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"Even like the Master whom I serve,
I pray ye not to grieve;
But as ye have believed in me,
Also in Him believe!

"I go, but leave you not forlorn,
As sheep without a guide;—
For Christ, the unfailing Comforter,
Shall still with you abide!

"Oh weep not, friends; a better home
Awaits me, and I go,
But to that home which is prepared
For ye who love me so!
Farewell, farewell! Unto my God,
And unto yours, I go!"

The Sabbath sun went down amid
A golden, cloudless sky;
And the freed spirit, cleansed from sin,
Arose to God on high.

Beneath the trees where he had died,
They buried him, and there
Enwove the flowery boughs to form
A quiet house of prayer.

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Long time with them dwelt Marien,
Until she was sent forth,
At the Lord's bidding to perform
New service on the earth.

Good speed to thee, thou blessed child,
May angels guide thy bark,
Mid slumbrous calm, mid tempests wild,
And o'er the waters dark!

Good speed to thee, thou blessèd child—
The angel of the poor—
And win from sorrow and from sin
The world from shore to shore.

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THE PAINTER'S LITTLE MODEL.

THERE was nothing but sunshine, beautiful flower-beds, smooth grass, and singing birds, within the high wall of the garden. A young mother sate with her children under a birch-tree in this garden. They formed a lovely group. Outside the wall the swarming children of the poor neighbors were at play; their shouts and merriment were heard by the mother and her children, and for some time their conversation was about them.

"You little know, my children," said she, after this subject seemed exhausted, "that when I was young I too was a poor child, a very poor child. I will tell you of my childhood.

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"My father was a gardener. I was the second of seven children; we lived in a narrow court that opened by a very narrow entry into the public road. There were many gentlemen's houses round us, and the tall trees of some spacious pleasure-grounds overtopped the houses on the one side of our court; but they gave us no pleasure, because in summer they shut out the light and made the air close, and in wet autumn weather the leaves lay in decaying masses in the corners of the court. The house in which we lived was the smallest in the whole court, and I well remember that my mother never ceased lamenting over the hardship of our having to pay the same rent as all the others. The public road into which our court opened, and from which it was as totally unseen as if it had not existed, was wide and open; there was, in fact, a sort of green in the middle of it, round which the road ran, and houses, shaded by old trees, or standing in the midst of gardens, surrounded it. On the the other side of the court lay a beautiful church, the burial-ground of which adjoined it; but there was a high wall between it and

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the houses, by which the air was again confined, and the church-yard itself was locked, so that the children never played there.

"My father was a working gardener who was employed by the day; he was not an old man, and yet he had a slow and heavy gait from rheumatism, which was a great trouble to him; and this probably was the reason that he was so often out of work. He loved flowers, and he used often to talk to us children about the beautiful gardens which belonged to the gentlemen's houses around us, and of the lovely flowers, which he had a particular way of describing, as if they were living things that he loved. Often when he talked in this way, my mother, or some of us children, asked why he did not sometimes bring home some flowers from these beautiful gardens, where there was such abundance. But the flowers were not his; he was a very honest man, and therefore he never took any.

"The descriptions which my father gave of these gardens excited me very much. I desired above all things to go into these beautiful gardens, and to see these wonderful

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flowers. I often lingered about the gates and palings of the great houses to peep in, and the little glimpses I thus got only excited me the more.

"Our neighbors' children mostly went to school. There were seven of us; five old enough to go to school; but my mother had bad health, and my father had but little work, and therefore it was not always that the penny a-week could be raised to send with each to school, and unless we took the penny on the Monday morning the mistress would not receive us. I was very useful at home to nurse the younger children; and when not needed for this purpose, or perhaps when want was very pressing upon us, I was employed to nurse the baby of a neighbor for my food.

"As the court was so close we children were always sent out into the road to play. Had we been allowed to play on the little green all would have been well, but this green was private property, and was enclosed with handsome green iron palisadoes, which looked very pretty, but which shut us out from its enjoyment. Our favorite place of

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resort, therefore, was an open space before a large, gloomy old stone house, which stood back from the road within great gates. This open space was enclosed with trees; and within it were two old stone benches, which nobody prevented our sitting upon. At the back of this house, I had heard my father say, there was a fine old garden. I could see the trees above the roof of the house; rooks and jackdaws built in them; but as my father never worked there, I knew no more about it.

"Who lived there I did not at that time know; and as they neither kept a grand carriage as the other rich neighbors did, nor made any show either, by horses or servants, nobody cared much about them. There was one particular, however, well known to us children who played under the trees in front. An old, very old face used to be seen occasionally at two of the upper windows. It was the face of a very old woman. But little of her person, however, could be seen; merely the shoulders, which seemed to wear a sort of garment trimmed with fur, and the singular head with its remarkably white cap.

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The face was grave, with apparently strong ly marked features, and a slight palsy kept the head in movement. Whenever the children were particularly noisy, the head appeared at the window, and the tremulous palsied movement gave the idea of her shaking her head at them and being angry. Some of them thought this very amusing, and would make loud noises to bring her to the window. They called her the old witch.

"The sight of this old, singular head, seen now and then at the upper windows of this gloomy old house, excited my imagination strongly; I wished very much to know what sort of a room it was in which she lived; what she did when we did not see her at the window, and who and what she really was.

"The windows of the room adjoining that in which the old lady lived, had also a strange look. There were three of them, the middle one of which only was open, and that was much taller than the others, and extended towards the roof; the other windows were darkened. Sometimes the old woman was seen to look out from this strange middle window, but that was very rarely indeed.

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"The children, the boys especially, seemed to delight in ridiculing the old lady; nobody had ever seen her go out, and as the grand people of the neighborhood were very rarely seen to call at the house in their carriages, they said just what they pleased about her.

"Beside the old lady there lived a gentleman in the house, whom everybody said was a great painter. He lived a deal abroad, in Italy and Germany, and though people said that he was a fine painter, nobody knew exactly what that meant; he was not a merchant, nor a lawyer, nor a doctor, nor a clergyman, though he lived in a large house, nor, though he was called a *painter*, was he a *house-painter*, which would have been intelligible to everybody. He was believed also to be poor, and yet, as he always paid ready money at all the shops, nobody troubled themselves about his poverty, but that was considered to explain the reason why the rich neighbors did not visit with him, and this in some degree influenced the poor.

"I used to sit and nurse and play with the children by the stone benches, and cast fur-

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tive glances at the house with fear and wonder. One day I chanced to go down with other children into some adjoining fields, through which there was a footpath, and while standing against a stile was addressed by a singular-looking gentleman with long hair, and a handsome but thoughtful countenance. He asked me many questions—of my parents, of my education; he stroked my hair; put it back from my forehead, and looked into my face; took my hand, looked at it inside and out, examined my arms, and then asked if I should like to be painted in a picture. I knew not what to say; I felt a little ashamed, and as was always the case when I addressed people of a station higher than my own, I replied in a whisper. The children that were with me laughed, and that only increased my embarrassment. The gentleman, however, inquired where I lived, and said that he would see my mother, and talk to her.

"When he was gone, some of the children said that he was the great painter who lived at the house where the old witch lived; and

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they jeered and laughed about my having my picture painted.

"When I came home my mother said that the gentleman had been, and that I was to go next morning to his house. I was half frightened. The gentleman said, that he would send his servant over for me, and I was to be paid for my time, twice as much as for nursing the neighbor's child, and was to have my victuals into the bargain. My parents were well pleased with the arrangement, and the next morning a middle-aged respectable woman came for me. We were so poor that my mother had washed my clothes while I slept, that I might go to the great house perfectly clean; and, hardly dry though they were, I went in them the next morning.

"I cannot tell you how strange it seemed to feel the great gate open for me, and to be taken by a side door into that large mysterious house. We entered a large marble-flagged hall, and went up a large staircase, where stood huge strange-looking figures, as they seemed to me. Higher and higher we went, and at length I was led into a

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large, darkened room, in which was a window high up to the ceiling, the shutters of which were closed below. Everything in the room had a strange look; large pictures, some finished, and others in progress, stood on large easels; casts of the human form, some beautiful and some which seemed horrible to me, stood around; hands and arms and feet in plaster were hung against the wall, and a huge figure seemed to be sitting in a tall chair covered up with cloth, from beneath which peeped forth a black, bare foot, which I at the first moment believed to be that of a live person, but which I afterwards found to belong to the lay figure in the chair.

"The gentleman whom I had seen the day before received me kindly, he wore a grey painting-coat, and held his pallet and brushes in one hand, and a stick in the other, which at the first greatly frightened me, because I thought perhaps he might beat me with it. My fears were very great, for I was ignorant, and knew nothing about artists and pictures. I spoke as usual in a low whisper, and as I meant to be very

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well-behaved I said "please" before every sentence. I sate without my frock in my little brown petticoat and ragged chemise sleeves. My attitude was not a difficult one; I was to represent a child among the shepherds of Arcadia, and in the picture sheep and lambs were lying around me in the midst of a beautiful pastoral landscape. I soon became tired, however, and very restless. After a while the door of the studio opened, and in came an old woman; at the sight of her the painter drew forward a large chair, arranged the cushions, and giving the old lady his hand, seated her in it; her head shook a little; but her countenance was beautiful; mild and gentle, and full of intelligence and affection; she looked first at the picture and then at me attentively for some time. I saw at once that this was the fearful old lady whose face I and the others had seen so often at the window. There she sate; in a black stuff-gown, a sort of furred short cloak, and that plain white cap, looking at me with her keen, clear blue eyes. She supported herself with a silver-headed cane, which she

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still held while she sate. Her head moved slightly, and her eye rested upon me. "The child is tired," said she to the painter, and then calling me up to her, she said, with what appeared at that time, severity, that I was one of those noisy children who disturbed her so much in the front of the house! I was frightened, and if she had required an answer from me, I could not have uttered it. Without asking her son's permission, for she was the painter's mother, she bade me go and take a run round the garden, and then come in again, for that I was not used to sitting so long and so still.

"Without knowing how to find my way into the garden, I went slowly down the great staircase up which I had been brought, past all the huge torsoes and plaster figures, and after I had stood in an uncomfortable state of bewilderment and terror in the great hall for a minute or two, the same middle-aged respectable woman, who had fetched me to the house, came out of a large closet, with a jar in her hand, and locking the door, saw me standing there, and looking

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half frightened. In reply to her inquiries, as to what I wanted, I told her in my usual whisper, that the old lady had sent me to have a run in the garden, and that I did not know where the garden was. Without returning any answer, she led me to a glass door at the end of the hall, and opening it, I saw at once a grand old garden, which like everything else about the place, impressed my mind at first with a feeling of awe.

"Instead of running in the garden as I had been desired to do, I walked slowly. In after years, I came to know that old garden well, and everything became familiar to me, but I never forgot my earliest impressions, although I remembered them as if they had belonged to somebody else. However, there I was then, strange to everything, and full of wondering terror. There was a square grass plat near the house, and in the middle of this stood a sun dial on a stone pillar of about my own height. I had no idea what it was, and it looked mysterious. Below the grass were cypresses and yew-trees, and lower still in the garden an im-

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mense cedar-tree, with a bench under its wide-spreading branches. The whole garden was quiet and solitary. There was no gardener at work in it at all, the sound that I heard was the monotonous splash of a little fountain which was encircled by a second grass plat, but all this lower part of the garden had a wild and somewhat neglected appearance. At the bottom of all, on a sloping bed, grew strawberries, at that time full of leaves and fruit. I saw the red, juicy, delicious berries lying abundantly among the leaves, and for a long time I resisted the temptation they offered. My mouth watered at every step; I thought after a little while that I might take one, just *one*, nobody would miss it. I stooped down, but before my hand had touched the plant, I saw a movement among the leaves, and out crawled a something which made my blood run cold. I had read at school about the serpent tempting Eve to eat the apple, and involuntarily I thought that this, too, was the serpent, or the evil one in another shape. The serpent, however, tempted Eve to sin, but this strange appa-

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rition drove at once from my mind all desire to pluck and eat.

Some way or other, I know not how, but I felt as if this was the strange, unshapely spirit of the place; the solemn yew-trees, the black-branched cedar, the large, gloomy house, the old, mysterious lady, with her palsied head, the artist's room, with his plaster figures of beauty and terror, all at once combined themselves into one idea, and that was connected with the queer, crawling creature that was now slowly receding from me: I ran down the walk, past the fountain and the cedar-tree, and within sight of the house, where I once more took my time, and walked slowly, looking at some large scarlet lilies that had sprung up among a tangle of jasmine, starred over with its white flowers, and which, partly fallen from the wall, either by neglect or accident, produced a beautiful effect, and which, as I afterwards found, the artist himself had been observant of, and had introduced into the foreground of that very Arcadian picture in which I myself was figuring. Here I stopped, and here

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again, moving slowly along the border, was, as I supposed at first, that very same unshapely monster from which I had just fled

"I was, at that time, an ignorant little creature; I had heard of witchcraft and magic, and imps and fiends, and I knew but very little of the true history of any thing; therefore it was perhaps no wonder that I at once imagined that myself or the garden was bewitched, and that the very thing from which I had just fled, had, by some strange power, conveyed itself away to be ready for me when I next stopped.

"I was frightened, indeed, and with a sort of franctic terror I ran back to the strawberry bed to see if it were there. But I could see nothing of it; it was gone. Where should I see it next? I did not dare to stop and look, but running now with all my might, I hastened back to the house, and passing through the large glass door once more was in the great silent hall, and at the foot of the staircase. I lingered a long time in the hope of seeing the middle-aged woman, but she was invisible, and all was as silent as

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the tomb, excepting the loud, and, as it seemed to me, deliberate ticking of a large old clock, the face of which was surrounded with gilded rays, and the great pendulum of which heavily swung to and fro, keeping such audible count of its moments, that I felt as if it would stun me if I listened to it. I therefore made the best of my way back to the artist's room.

"The old lady was still sitting in the large chair as I had left her, and with her silver headed cane in her hand as if she had never moved. The artist was at work at his picture, and I at once saw that the old woman had taken my place as his sitter, and that he was painting her also into his large picture. Neither they nor I spoke, and for a little while I watched him at work on that old and really grand head.

"Everything seemed strange and like a dream around me. I felt as if the picture were real, and I and everything else ideal. Out of this dream-like feeling I was roused by the old lady who, calling me to her side, asked me abruptly what I had seen in the garden. Her manner was kind, although

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somewhat sharp, and therefore, although I still spoke in my timid whisper and with my scrupulous regard to what I thought propriety, I answered candidly in my uncultivated English,—

"'Please,' said I, 'there's such a queer thing in the garden—oh, such a queer un!'

"'What does she say?' asked the old lady, who was rather deaf, and to whom my whisper was inaudible.

"Her son repeated my words with a smile, and coming forward to us asked me what that was like which I had seen.

"I described, with all the exaggeration of my ignorant fear, the creature that I had seen; its strange unearthly withered sort of countenance and its four legs like distorted arms; and the strange case or "lid," as I called it, under which it hid itself, and upon which were curious and mysterious looking signs, as if painted in dingy gold. I said that the creature seemed to move slowly, but that when I left it at the strawberry bed, and ran with all my might towards the house, it had got there before me, and was staring at me from under a red lily.

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"The artist smiled again, and again repeated my words, with an accuracy which surprised me, to the old woman.

"'It was a tortoise,' exclaimed she, when she heard, and smiled too. 'She has seen the two tortoises, and she took them for one,' said the old lady, speaking loud and laughing quite merrily.

"'You never saw a tortoise, then, in your life before;' said the artist to me.

"I replied 'No,' in a whisper.

"'She has never heard of a tortoise in her life,' said the old lady, and then said, as if correcting herself, 'poor thing, how should she!'

"The painter went to a large book-case at one end of his studio, and took down a book, and the old lady went on talking to me.

"'Well, they *are* queer things,' she said, 'to those who have never seen anything of the sort before, very queer! And those tortoises,' added she, 'may have lived a hundred years, for anything I know; and they may live a hundred more. It's a great age that, is it not?' I made no reply, but

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fixed my eyes on her countenance, thinking how very old she also looked, when she startled me by saying,—'perhaps you think me as old as the tortoise; perhaps you think me a hundred years old? No, I'm not that, I'm not so old as the tortoise—I am only eighty-nine!'

"The painter now came forward with his book and laid before me an engraving of just such a tortoise as I had seen. He began to read to me something about it, and then suddenly interrupting himself, he said;—'but you can't understand this; you know nothing either of natural history nor geography—it's no use reading to you.' He said truly; I understood neither one nor the other; and my mind at that moment was in a strange confusion.

"He put the book back in his back-case, and then sitting down before his beautiful picture, took me between his knees.—'There is the very tangle of jasmin out of which grows the scarlet lily, and there, under those branches, creeps forth one of the very tortoises you have seen!' I gave an involuntary shudder as I there indeed saw it,

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as it seemed to me, creeping forth from the canvas with its old skinny countenance beneath the shelter of the dingy shell upon which were the mysterious hieroglyphics.

"'Poor thing, she is frightened even at the picture of the tortoise,' said he, speaking loudly to the old woman, and then again turning to me he began to tell me about beautiful foreign lands where these tortoises come from, and all that he said, seemed full of such a spirit of love and beauty that I involuntarily shed tears. I cannot tell why, but my own life seemed so poor and wretched in the miserable court in which we lived, where we paid a high rent for the smallest house, and where we children often cried for hunger and cold. It seemed to me that somehow or other, life ought to be different when even the strange, stupid-looking tortoise was so much cared for by God as, from what the artist now told me, I felt it to be.

"But God was caring for me even then. From that day new life dawned upon us. My father was regularly employed to work in that garden; and when, in a few years,

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death deprived seven young children of their parents, we found the truest friends in the good artist and his aged mother.

"She lived, like the tortoises, to be a hundred years old, and as to the painter, you know him, my children, it is Mr. ———, the well known Royal Academician, my revered and beloved benefactor."

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ABOUT THE MAN WHO LIVED IN A WILDERNESS,

AND WHO HAD A CHILD FOR A NEIGHBOR.

T was a June morning; roses and yellow jasmine covered the old wall in the poet's garden; the little brown mason bees flew in and out of their holds beneath the pink and white and yellow flowers; peacock butterflies, with large blue eyes on their crimson velvet wings, fluttered about, and settled on the orange-brown wall-flowers. Aloft in the broad-leaved sycamore-tree, the blackbird was singing as if he was out of his senses for joy; he sang as loud as any nightingale, and his heart was glad because his young brood were hatched, and he knew that they now sate with their little yellow beaks poking

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out of the nest, and thinking what a famous bird their father was. All the robins, and tomtits, and linnets, and redstarts, that sate in the trees of the garden shouted vivas, and bravuras, and encored him delightfully.

The poet himself, to whom the garden belonged, sate under the double-flowering hawthorn, which was all in blossom—he sate on a green chair, and his best friend sate beside him. Beneath the lower branches of the tree was hung the canary bird's cage; the children had brought it out because the morning was so fine, and the little canary loved fresh air and the smell of flowers. It never troubled him that other birds flew about from one end of the garden to the other, or sate and sung on the waving and leafy branches; he loved his cage, and while the old blackbird poured forth his grand melodies, the little canary sat like a prince in a stage-box and nodded his head and sang an accompaniment.

One of the poet's children, the little daughter, sate in her own little garden; the garden was full of flowers, and bees and butterflies flitted about in the sunshine.

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The child, however, was not noticing them; she was thinking only of one thing, and that was the great daisy-root which was all in flower; it was the largest daisy-root in the whole garden, and two-and-fifty double pink and white daisies were crowded upon it. They were, however, no longer daisies to the child's eyes, but two and fifty little charity children in green stuff gowns and white tippets and white linen caps, that had had a holiday given them; she saw them all with pink cheeks and bright eyes, running in a group and talking as they went; the hum of the bees around seemed the sound of their voices. The child was happy to think that two-and-fifty charity children were let loose from school to run about in the sunshine; her heart went with them, and she was so full of joy that she started up and ran to tell her father, who was sitting with his best friend under the hawthorn tree. Sad and bitter thoughts, however, oppressed the poet's heart; he had been disappointed where he had hoped for good; his soul was under a cloud, and as the child ran up to

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tell him about the little charity children, in whose joy she thought he would sympathize, she heard him say to his friend:—

"No, I have no hope of human nature now; it is a poor, miserable thing that is not worth working for. My best endeavors have been spent in its service; my youth and my manhood's strength—my very life—and this is my reward! I will no longer strive to do good. I will write for money's sake as others do—and not for the good of mankind!"

The poet's words were bitter, and tears came in the eyes of his best friend. Never had the child heard such words from her father before; he had been to her hitherto as a great and good angel.

"I will write," said he, "for money's sake, as others do, and not for the good of mankind!"

"My father, if you do," said the child, in a voice of mournful indignation, "I will no longer read what you write; I will trample all your writings under my feet!" Large tears rolled down her cheeks, and her eyes were fixed on her father's face.

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The poet took the child in his arms, and kissed her; an angel had touched his heart, and he could forgive his bitterest enemies.

"I will tell you something, my child," said he, in his usually mild voice. The child leaned her head against his breast, and listened. "Once upon a time a man lived in a great wide wilderness; he was a poor man, and worked very hard for his bread; he lived in a cave of a rock, and because the sun shone burning hot into the cave he twined roses, and jasmines, and honeysuckles all around it: and in front of it, and in the ledges of the rock he planted flowers and sweet shrubs, and made it very pleasant. Water ran gurgling from a fissure in the rock into a little basin, whence it poured in gentle streams through his garden, in which grew all kinds of delicious fruits. Birds sang in the tall trees which nature herself had planted, and little squirrels, and lovely green lizards, with bright, intelligent eyes, lived in the branches and among the flowers. All would have gone well with the man, had not evil spirits

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taken possession of his cave; they troubled him night and day; they dropped canker blight upon his roses, nipped off his jasmine and honeysuckle flowers, and in the form of caterpillar and blight, ate his beautiful fruits. It made the man angry and bitter; the flowers were no longer beautiful to him, and when he looked at them he thought only of the canker and the caterpillar; 'I can no longer take pleasure in them,' said he, 'I will leave the cave, and go elsewhere.' He did so; and he travelled on and on; but it was a vast wilderness in which he was, and so it was many and many a day before he came to a place of rest, nor did he know that all this time the evil spirits who had plagued him so in his own cave, were still going with him; but they were; and they made every place he came to seem worse than the last; their very breath cast a blight upon everything. He was footsore and weary, and very miserable. A feeling like despair was in his heart, and he said he might as well die as live; he lay down in the wilderness, and scarcely had he done that, when he

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heard behind him the pleasantest sound in the world; a little child singing like a bird because her heart was innocent and full of joy; the next moment she was at his side. The evil spirits that were about him, when they saw her coming, drew back a little, for she brought with her a beautiful company of angels and bright spirits, little cherubs, with round, rosy cheeks, golden hair and laughing eyes, stuck between two doves' wings as white as snow. The child had not the least idea that these beautiful spirits always were about her; all she knew was, that she was full of joy, and that she loved above all things to do good. When she saw the poor man lying there, she went up to him, and talked so pityingly and yet so cheerfully to him, that he felt as if her words would cure him. She told him that she lived just by, and that he should go with her and rest, and get well in her cave. He went with her, and it was just such a cave as his own, only much smaller. Roses and honeysuckles and jasmines grew all round it; and birds were singing, and gold and silver

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fishes were sporting about in the water; and there were such beds of strawberries, all red and luscious, that filled the air with odour. It was a beautiful place; there seemed to be no canker nor blight on anything; and yet the man saw how spiders had woven webs like the most beautiful lace from one vine branch to another; and butterflies that had once been devouring caterpillars were flitting about; and just as in his own garden, fat yellow frogs were squatted under the cool strawberry leaves; but the child loved the frogs as well as the green lizards, and said that they did her no harm, and that there were plenty of strawberries both for them and for her.

"The evil spirits that had troubled the man, and followed him, could not get into the child's garden; it was impossible, because all those rosy-cheeked cherubs and white angels lived there; and that which is good, be it ever so small, is a great deal stronger than that which is evil, be it ever so large. So they sate outside and bit their nails for vexation; and as the man stayed a long time with the

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child they got so tired of waiting, that some of them flew away forever. At length the man kissed the child, and went back to his own place. When he got there he found that owing to the evil spirits having been so long away, the flowers and the fruits had in great measure recovered themselves; there was hardly any canker or blight left, and as the child came now very often to see him, and brought with her all her bright company, the place was freed, at least while she stayed, from the evil ones. That is a true story. There are many men, who, like him, live in a wilderness, and it is happy for them when they have a child for their neighbor."

The poet was silent; the child kissed him, and then, without saying a word about the little charity children, ran off to sit down beside them, and perhaps to tell them the story which her father had just told her.

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THE BLIND BOY AND HIS SISTER.

"OH brother," said fair Annie,
To the blind boy at her side;
"Would thou could'st see the sunshine lie
On hill and valley, and the sky
Hung like a glorious canopy
O'er all things far and wide!

"Would thou could'st see the waters
In many a distant glen;
The mountain flocks that graze around;
Nay, even this patch of stony ground,
These crags, with silver lichen crowned,
I would that thou could'st ken!

"Would thou could'st see my face, brother,
As well as I see thine:
For always what I cannot see
It is but half a joy to me.
Brother, I often weep for thee,
Yet thou dost ne'er repine!"

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"And why should I repine, Annie?"
Said the blind boy with a smile;
"I ken the blue sky and the grey;
The sunny and the misty day;
The moorland valley stretched away
For many and many a mile!

"I ken the night and day, Annie,
For all ye may believe;
And often in my spirit lies
A clear light as of mid-day skies;
And splendors on my vision rise,
Like gorgeous hues of eve.

"I sit upon the stone, Annie,
Beside our cottage door,
And people say, 'that boy is blind,'
And pity me, although I find
A world of beauty in my mind,
A never-ceasing store.

"I hear you talk of mountains,
The beautiful, the grand;
Of splintered peaks so grey and tall;
Of lake, and glen, and waterfall;
Of flowers and trees;—I ken them all;—
Their difference understand.

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"The harebell and the gowan
Are not alike to me,
Are different as the herd and flock,
The blasted pine-tree of the rock,
The waving birch, the broad, green oak,
The river, and the sea.

"And oh, the heavenly music,
That as I sit alone,
Comes to mine inward sense as clear
As if the angel-voices were
Singing to harp and dulcimer
Before the mighty Throne!

"It is not as of outward sound,
Of breeze, or singing bird;
But wondrous melody refined;
A gift of God unto the blind;
An inward harmony of mind,
By inward senses heard!

"And all the old-world stories
That neighbors tell o'nights;
Of fairies on the fairy mound,
Of brownies dwelling under ground,
Of elves careering round and round,
Of fays and water-sprites;

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All this to me is pleasantness,—
Is all a merry show;
I see the antic people play,—
Brownie and kelpie, elf and fay,
In a sweet country far away,
Yet where I seem to go.

"But better far than this, Annie,
Is when thou read'st to me
Of the dear Saviour meek and kind,
And how he healed the lame and blind,
Am I not healed?—for in my mind
His blessèd form I see!

"Oh, love is not of sight, Annie,
Is not of outward things;
For in my inmost soul I know,
His pity for all mortal woe;
His words of love, spoke long ago,
Unseal its deepest springs!

"Then do not mourn for me, Annie,
Because that I am blind;—
The beauty of all outward sight;
The wondrous shows of day and night;
All love, all faith, and all delight,
Are strong in heart and mind!"

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Part XXX.

FIRESIDE TALES.

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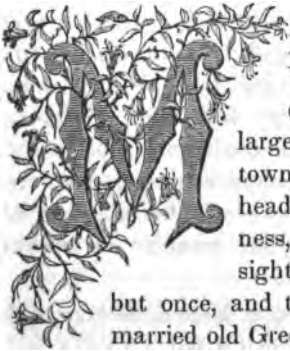
THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.



R. JOSEPH HILYARD was a rich dyer in one of our largest manufacturing towns, a plodding, hard-headed man of business, who never lost sight of the main chance but once, and that was when he married old Green's daughter, with seven thousand pounds to her fortune, instead of Ellen Stretton, who had nothing. He soon found out his mistake, for his wife was one of those unhappy-tempered women who make everybody miserable about them. Ellen Stretton married also two years afterwards, not for love, I am sorry to say, and

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was not more happy than he. Her husband, whose name was Trevisham, was also a dyer, as hard a headed man as Hilyard, but without his good qualities. He was always in law with somebody; he had a desperate lawsuit with Hilyard about the fence of their drying-grounds, which unfortunately adjoined; it was but a small thing to quarrel about, but, like a rolling snowball, it grew at every turn, and, in the end, brought on his ruin. He lost his lawsuit and then he died, leaving his affairs in a very bad state. When all were wound up, the creditors, out of compassion to the widow, whom everybody respected, gave up sufficient to ensure her and her only child, a daughter, an annuity of seventy pounds for her life.

Hilyard had been a fierce adversary to the husband, and the widow felt a peculiar grief to see herself, in some measure, ruined by his means; still she was not without comfort, even in her depressed circumstances; she had good health, a cheerful disposition, a heart full of love both to God and man, a beloved daughter, whom she herself was able to educate well, and beyond all—now that poor

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Mr. Trevisham was gone—peace and comfort at her fireside such as she had never known in her most prosperous days. Let nobody exclaim at this, but it is true that when she read the words "Better is a dinner of herbs with love, than a stalled ox and dissension therewith," she could say Amen from her entire heart.

Hilyard had gained the lawsuit and his adversary was dead. "There was a triumph for him!" people said; but he did not find it exactly so. When the man was dead and gone, and his drying-grounds added to his own, many a reproachful remembrance of the widow and her child came to his mind. His own wife, who had been the thorn in his side and the quill-feather in the down pillow for so many years, had, in process of time, like poor Mr. Trevisham, gone to her long rest, and then he thought with himself whether he should not realize the dream of his youth, and make atonement for the wrongs of his after years, by marrying the widow Trevisham. He thought a deal about it; he had never spoken to her for years; in fact it was years now since he had seen her; for,

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though they dwelt in the same town, he lived in a large square stone house which a lawyer had built and he had bought, in one suburb, and she, since her misfortunes, as they were called, lived in a little cottage—a very little one—in an opposite direction. He questioned, as I said, whether he should marry her, but, someway or other, the idea seemed strange; he thought people would talk amazingly if he did. No, his marrying days were over, he decided.

People saw him buttoned up in his good broad-cloth going steadily about his business and making his fifteen hundred a year, and never suspected one atom of the romance which had taken possession of his naturally good heart. One day he took a drive to the little suburban village in which the widow lived, and, leaving his chaise at the inn, strolled up the lane in which her cottage stood. He had no idea of making a call, not the slightest in the world, he only wanted to see the place. It was a very small cottage; two gentlewomen living on seventy pounds a-year could not afford a large house.

"It cannot be above eight or nine pounds

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a-year," mused he to himself; "a kitchen, a parlor, and two bed-rooms, and a little wash-house at the back, that must be all; but it is prodigiously neat, and a mighty pretty garden. Ellen was always fond of flowers;" and with that the sunny, rose-scented days of their youth came to his memory bewitchingly. "They keep a girl, no doubt, to do the housework; they could not afford a servant at full wages," continued his musings; "I wonder if any of their relations help them?—but, poor thing, she had so few relations, and none of them rich, and he was such a spendthrift that he drained his own family—I don't believe there is one that would help her; the Trevishams have not a bit of heart among them!"

So pondered Mr. Hilyard as he walked up the lane; in a while he made a stand, and, turning round, took a steady survey of the back of the cottage. There was little to be seen but a thick holly-hedge, a green water-butt, the little back-kitchen window, the cottage roof and one chimney. It was about the middle of November, in the afternoon, and Mrs. Trevisham and her sweet daughter

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Kitty, then just turned fifteen, were sitting at the little parlor fire, the daughter reading and the mother at her sewing. Kitty had just put on some coal, and the little servant-maid in the little kitchen had just broken up her fire and put the kettle on for tea; there was only, as I said, one chimney to the cottage, and these movements at the two fires had sent the smoke curling out of the chimney which made quite a picturesque effect against the dull gray November sky. And it was at this very smoke which Mr. Joseph Hilyard, with his comfortable income of fifteen hun-a-year, now stood looking; he was not, however, noticing the picturesque effect, but, in imagination, was picturing to himself the little household that was assembled beside the fire from which this smoke proceeded. You may take my word for it that Joseph Hilyard, middle-aged man and dyer though he was, had a very vivid imagination, for the picture which he thus saw warmed his heart to its very core; the broadcloth in which he was enveloped was nothing to the warmth of his heart. He walked back again past the little green gate which led to the house-door;

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a little girl was coming up with a milk-can, and, turning in at the green gate, knocked at the door. He was a wealthy man, as we know, and a girl taking milk to his own house would have excited no interest in his mind; and yet he stopped to see who would open the door to take this pennyworth of milk. It was only the little servant girl. At the bottom of the little garden he stopped again and looked at the front of the cottage; the fire that was burning in parlor and kitchen cast a glow within, for it was getting dusk, and by the parlor-window stood Kitty reading, for she had gone to the window for light. The outline of the bent head and the youthful bust sent a still warmer glow to his heart; it reminded him of that Ellen Stretton who had once been all the world to him. With hasty steps he then returned to the inn, ordered out his chaise, drank a glass of negus, and then drove home to his large square house, and his many servants.

People talk a deal about "the luxury of doing good." Mr. Joseph Hilyard determined that he would enjoy this luxury; but he did not say a word to any one—not a syllable!

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He thought a deal about the cottage fireside and seventy pounds a-year. Christmas-day was not far off, and he remembered that people could not have fine Christmas dinners with only seventy pounds a-year. Two days before Christmas-day, therefore, the carrier's cart stopped at Mrs. Trevisham's cottage, and left, carriage paid, a large hamper. It was carried into the little kitchen, and the little servant-maid summoned her mistress to open it.

"Dear me! what can it be?" exclaimed Mrs. Trevisham, as the girl hastily cut the strings and opened the creakling lid of the hamper. "Kitty, come here!" and Kitty came instantly out of the parlor with her sewing in her hand, which, however, she soon threw down to help in unpacking the hamper;—a turkey, a ham, a dozen of mince-pies, so beautifully packed that not one was broken, a game pie, such almonds and raisins, and delicious fruit for desert, and a dozen of wine!

"Who can have sent them? What can it mean?" exclaimed both mother and daughter.

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It was long since Mrs. Trevisham had had a regular Christmas dinner of her own; now and then she and her daughter were asked out, but not often; now, however, here was a splendid dinner for them, and who must they invite to partake of it? Oh, there were plenty of poor folks who should have some of it; that was soon decided; and then nothing was thought of for the rest of the evening but who could have sent this present? They could not imagine; it *might* be this person and it *might* be that; but they hardly thought it could be! They never guessed the right person—and how indeed should they?

It was now five years since this first Christmas dinner was sent, and at the same time precisely, for the next four years, did the same carrier's cart bring the same present, or slightly varied, to the widow's house. It was a pleasant mystery; it was a real comfort to know that there was *somebody* who cared that much for them. But the delicacies of that Christmas provision were not eaten alone by the widow and her daughter; some poor neighbor, some sick woman or man, or

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invalid child was always a partaker; and as to the wine, Mrs. Trevisham's little cellar was now never without a supply. She and her daughter only drank a glass now and then, on very extraordinary occasions; on Christmas-day, for instance, when they drank the health of their unknown benefactor; but the sick poor of that populous neighborhood had many a vial-bottle filled from her store, which often did more good than physic. Indeed, dear reader, I cannot tell you all the good which these Christmas presents did to Mrs. Trevisham and her poor neighbors.

One day, when it was getting rather dusk, Mr. Hilyard took another walk up that lane. A gentleman overtook him; it was the good parish doctor; they walked on together and fell into discourse. Mr. Hilyard was one of those rich men who had not done much actual good with their money. The fact was, he had never thought about it; he subscribed to the Bible Society and Foreign Missions, and the Tract Association, and, as he paid his workpeople's wages regularly, he thought he did all that was required from him. He was a stranger, of course, to the doctor,

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and they began to talk about the poor, of whom this good man knew so much. He said how much more the wealthy ought to do for the poor than they commonly do; that it was often those in straitened circumstances who were their greatest benefactors; and then he proved this by saying how much a lady and her daughter who lived in that very lane, and whose income was under a hundred a-year did for their poor neighbors; how the mother visited them, and was a friend under all circumstances; and when they were ill sent them the best of wine, which was often the means of their recovery, though he questioned if either she or her daughter drank wine themselves, for they had been the means of establishing a Temperance Society which had done a deal of good. He said that this Mrs. Trevisham was the kindest and most Christian woman he knew, and that it was a pity that she had not the means of doing all the good she might; and her daughter, he said, was a pattern to all young ladies; he believed that she and her mother were obliged to make out their income by doing needlework, but, for

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all that, the daughter found time to teach in the Ragged School, which never would have been established but for her, and that she herself gave half-a-guinea to its funds.

Mr. Joseph Hilyard pulled out his large well-filled green silk purse, and gave the doctor five pounds for this school, which he said must be put down as from a friend; and then taking leave of the good man, he turned back and walked slowly down the lane. Again the cottage chimney smoked, and again his heart was as warm as if he had sate by its fire. He was filled with all sorts of grand schemes of beneficence; he would do—he did not know what, for such excellent people as these. While he was thus vaguely thinking he approached the cottage; the door opened, and out came Kitty Trevisham in her dark merino dress, plaid shawl, and straw bonnet with dark-blue ribbon. She looked at Mr. Hilyard as she came out, and then walked briskly on as if she had business in hand. She was a sweet, bright-looking creature, with the kindest eyes that were ever set in a human countenance. When she came within sight of the parlor-window she looked towards

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it, smiled sweetly and nodded; Mr. Hilyard looked also, and there stood the mother, in her plain cap and black dress, and nodded affectionately to her daughter. This little circumstance expressed a great deal; mother and daughter were all the world to each other: there was the most perfectly good understanding between them, and the last look, even for an absence of an hour or two, was full of affectionate intelligence.

She walked on briskly and he followed; she had such a neat pretty figure. She walked uncommonly well, and had a remarkably pretty foot and ankle, as he could see when she held up her dress where the road was wet.

"I wish I were a young man for her sake!" thought Mr. Hilyard to himself; "now I wonder who she will marry?" and with that, all at once, a grand idea floated into his mind. He would send for his nephew, Edward Grey, and adopt him as his son, and he should marry this good and pretty daughter of widow Trevisham! It was a splendid idea. This nephew was the son of his only sister who had married a poor schoolmaster in the

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country. She had often asked him to do something for this, her eldest son; he was said to be a fine scholar; a very gentlemanly young man, of excellent principles, and he was now six-and-twenty. He could not think how he had never done anything for him before; he felt all at once as if he had been a hard-hearted wretch; never, till that day, had he given a penny even to a Ragged School. Well, he would turn over a new leaf, now; he would send for his nephew, get him married to this poor, but good girl, and then he should no longer be ashamed of himself.

Little did sweet Kitty Trevisham know of the schemes which were working in the head of the respectable gentleman who was following her. She was going to the Ragged School for a couple of hours that evening, and she was thinking of nothing but her poor scholars.

In a month's time Edward Grey was at his uncle's, as handsome a young man as his mother had described him, with an open countenance, and a great deal of decision in his manner. He was one of those men who in reality do not need any one to help them

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on in life; the elements of success are in themselves; and men of this character are not such as can have a path chalked out for them by another. Joseph Hilyard found his nephew a very different person to what he expected; he fancied that he would be pliable and extremely grateful, and that he should open his plans to him with respect to Kitty Trevisham, immediately, but there was an independence about him which it did not seem safe to interfere with, and almost an indifference about the large income of which, if he pleased, he might be the heir, so that his uncle felt pretty sure that if he all at once revealed his designs, his nephew would turn restive on his hands; and there was at the same time so much manliness and straightforward honesty of character about him, that he could not help feeling respect for him. "Besides this," as the foreman said, "he took very kindly to the business," and seemed so thoroughly to understand it, that there was no doubt of his becoming a most valuable assistant, or partner.

They were, in fact, two of the most excellent men that ever met; and yet, in some

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respects they were so different in character, that while they remained in any degree strangers to each other, they worked ill together. Edward Grey was unlike any person with whom his uncle had come in contact; as yet he had been sole king and master of his world; he had no idea but of remaining so, and now here was a young man whom he had introduced into it, carrying everything his own way, and that with the utmost quietness and self-complacency. He never asked his uncle's leave for what he did, and yet he established directly a Temperance Society among the men, and set about forming a Mechanics' Institute for the whole town. Mr. Hilyard, as we said, was full of all sorts of grand benevolent schemes a short time before, and approved of Temperance Societies, and schools for the people, yet now he was angry with his nephew for zealously co-operating in them. Perhaps he was displeased that men of influence in the place—great philanthropists with whom he had never had anything to do, should seem to court his nephew's acquaintance as they did, stranger though he was to

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them all; it was a sort of tacit reproof to himself, and it annoyed him. But let the fault be where it would, the uncle and the nephew did not get on so comfortably together as they ought to have done, when a little circumstance seemed, for the moment, to be the one drop to the full cup of the uncle's displeasure, and made it overflow abundantly.

He had, immediately on his coming, made his nephew a present of a handsome gold watch and chain, and this the young man lost one day when he was bathing. It was a most distressing thing to him, and he could only surmise, that some dexterous thief had stolen it from his clothes as they lay on the river's bank. He said nothing to his uncle of his loss, for so grieved was he to have failed, as he felt he had done, in winning his affection, that he was unwilling still further to displease him by this apparent carelessness. In his heart, Edward Grey regarded his uncle as a second father; he would have died to have served him; but he was not one of those who could make professions, and as his uncle seemed cold and distant, he deter-

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mined quietly to go on fulfilling every duty, trusting to time and circumstances for making all straight between them.

The watch had been lost a week when it came to his uncle's knowledge, and that accidentally. A person came to the counting-house where they both were, and asked whether Mr. Edward Grey had not lost something. "My watch!" said the young man, joyfully; "a gold watch and chain; I lost them a week ago!"

His uncle was astonished and enraged; "Was the watch then of so little value that he could lose it and say nothing about it?" In twenty different ways he could look at this affair and be made angry by it. He never had lost his own watch, and if he had, he should have been at some trouble to have found it, &c., &c.

Grey thought his uncle unreasonable in being thus angry without hearing him say one word in his own defence. It seemed to him that there was much more said than the occasion warranted, and for that reason he was silent, and by this means his uncle did not know how much he had suffered, nor

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what pains he had, in truth, taken for the recovery of his loss.

The uncle was not only very angry, but very much grieved; in his anger he declared that it was the last present that he ever would make him, and yet, the next moment, he threw him ten sovereigns, and told him to go and see if he could get back his watch for that money, which he did not believe. Grey took the money thus ungraciously given, and went out with the man who said he was sent by the person who had found the watch.

Mr. Joseph Hilyard would have been no little astonished, could he have seen his nephew conducted to Mrs. Trevisham's cottage. It was a lovely afternoon, towards the close of summer; the little garden was as full of flowers as it could be, and jasmine and roses peeped in and clustered round the open parlor-window, and there sate Mrs. Trevisham in her mourning, and Kitty in a pretty pink dress and black silk apron; her lovely dark brown hair fastened up in its simple knot, and no single ornament about her excepting her own dear smiles and affectionate eyes, looking just like a rose, and

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every bit as sweet, and she told Edward Grey, who from the first moment he saw her was quite in a bewilderment of delight, how she and the servant maid set off one morning, at five o'clock, to look for mushrooms in the meadows, because her mother was so fond of them, and how she found, under a sod, which seemed to have been cut out for the purpose, a gold watch and chain; she said she was so astonished that she did not know what to do, and as she thought that most likely some thief had hidden it there, she brought it away; that there was no name in it excepting the maker's, and that was a London name; that she and her mother considered what had better be done; they thought of advertising, and then it occurred to them that she might inquire of some of the watchmakers in the town if the watch had ever been in their hands; that she did so, and soon found one who told her that he had sold it only a few weeks before, to Mr. Hilyard, for his nephew, and that to him it belonged; and in confirmation, he showed her an advertisement in the paper, offering a reward for this very watch. And now here it was,

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and it was impossible for Kitty to tell him the pleasure she had in restoring it to him.

The watch had become of ten times its former value as he received it from her hand. How he longed to kiss that hand! He was the last man in the world to make fine speeches, but his countenance expressed something of what he felt. And then Mrs. Trevisham began to say that in former times she had known Mr. Hilyard; that unfortunately there had been a lawsuit between her late husband and him, but that when she was young she had thought very well of him. Grey said that his uncle was the best man living; that he had given him the watch, but that was nothing to his having taken him into the business, which was a great thing for him, who was poor, and the eldest of a large family. Mrs. Trevisham had evident pleasure in hearing anything to his advantage; and how astonished the uncle would have been could he have heard all that his nephew said in his praise!

Kitty went on with her sewing, and the mother and he talked a great deal. He sate with the watch in his hand, and the wonder

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is, that he did not commit some extravagance or other, he felt so inconceivably happy. He said that the thief who had stolen the watch and hid it there, never imagined the blessing he was conferring upon him. He did not explain his meaning, but Mrs. Trevisham knew very well what he meant, and perhaps Kitty did, for she blushed as she went on with her work. He had offered, in his advertisement, ten pounds for the recovery of his watch, but he never thought of offering it either to the mother or daughter; he would much more likely have offered his heart and his life; however, he left a handsome present for the man who had fetched him, and who was a poor gardener with a large family, and after he had taken tea with them and walked in the little garden, and helped Kitty to tie up the carnations, he took his leave, promising to visit them again before long.

If his watch had been suddenly encircled with diamonds, it could not have been more precious. His uncle told him angrily he hoped he would not lose it again. There was no danger of that.

This affair of the watch did not tend to a

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better understanding between uncle and nephew, and in spite of all Edward Grey's assiduity in the business, he could not find the way into his uncle's affections.

"There is something cold about him," said Hilyard to himself; "a very good young man he is, there's no doubt of that—but I hate your good people: he is not the husband for my Kitty—after all, I shall be forced to have her myself," and with that he laughed amazingly. He thought a deal about both Kitty and her mother, and one day he was at the trouble of going to the Ragged School where he thought that he might have some talk with her. There she was, as cheerful as a lark, and as fresh as a flower among the little ragged urchins, and the very expression of their faces, and the tones of their voices were changed as they approached her. The master of the school had not words enough to praise her, and Kitty had no idea, not the least in the world, that it was for her sake that this good man now visited the school and left behind him a second donation.

"How odd it will be," thought Mrs. Trevisham, the day after Edward Grey had de-

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clared his passion, and been accepted, "for Kitty to be Mr. Hilyard's niece; I wonder what he will say, and whether he has forgotten those old times. Edward thinks he will be pleased, though he is so rich, but then Edward is young and in love, and I know that he once thought a good deal about money."

It was Edward Grey's intention candidly to tell his uncle that he had fallen in love with a pretty, penniless girl, some day when he was in a good humor, and it was his uncle's intention also to tell his nephew all about sweet Kitty Trevisham some day when they were talking about schools for the people, and such things, for then he thought he should be able to interest him a out the young teacher at the Ragged School. He fancied he could draw a very pretty picture of her in the midst of her forlorn group, and this he thought, considering his nephew's philanthropic propensities, would very likely make a deep impression upon him.

Summer and autumn were now over. Christmas was approaching. There had been, as one may say, a cessation of hostili-

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ties for some time between uncle and nephew, they were gradually and silently approaching each other in the spirit of a mutual good faith, still neither of them had found the propitious moment for which they were waiting; and each was beginning to like the other so well, that they almost feared to make the momentous disclosure, lest it should throw them back into that state of alienation which had been so painful to both.

Edward was a frequent, though secret, visitor at Mrs. Trevisham's, and the long history of all their former troubles was familiar to him. He also knew of the five years' Christmas present, and of all their fruitless conjectures as to who their unknown friend could be.

"You will dine with us, Edward, on Christmas day?" said the mother; "I have no doubt but we shall have our usual dinner, but at all events you will come?" Edward promised, and went home determined that this should be the last visit he would pay to this beloved family without his uncle's knowledge, for he would *make* an opportunity if he did not *find* one that very evening. The

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good uncle, too full of the delight of having sent off a still more bountifully supplied hamper than usual, together with a letter, of which we shall speak anon, sate that evening in his easy house-coat and slippers by the parlor fire, the very image of good humor, as his nephew entered. The fire burned brightly, so did the lamp; tea came in and the urn bubbled and hissed, and, though there were only two men to partake of this meal, which seems so peculiarly to require the presence of woman, yet it would have been difficult to find a better image of comfort than it presented.

"Now," thought the nephew, "I will tell him."

"Now," thought the uncle, "I will make the attack." Nevertheless the tea was drank in silence.

"Uncle," at length, began the young man.

"My dear fellow," interrupted the uncle; "but go on—what were you going to say?"

"I beg your pardon, my dear sir, after you," said Edward, with a ceremonious manner very unusual to him.

"Well, my dear lad," began the uncle in

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good earnest, "I may as well tell you at first as last—I have often wished to tell you—I want to see you married."

"Very strange," said the nephew, joyfully; "but I was just going to tell you that I am very much disposed to get married."

"What, the deuce; you have no girl in your eye, have you?" asked he, as the idea struck him, that perhaps his nephew might be engaged to some girl at his native place.

"Yes, I have," replied Edward.

"What the dickens could make you think of such a thing? How do I know who you have chosen—what right had you to choose for yourself?"

"Nobody had so great a right to choose for me as myself," said Edward, astonished.

"Sir," returned his uncle, raising himself in his chair and looking very angry, "I had chosen a wife for you before I had seen you; don't interrupt me, sir," said he, seeing his nephew about to speak; "and I should not have sent for you if I had not wanted a husband for this good little girl. It was no merit of yours that made me adopt you, but my esteem and admiration for her; and I

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have made up my mind, sir, either you shall marry her, or she shall be my heir!" and with this the uncle crossed his legs and threw himself back in his chair, in a very determined and dogmatical manner.

"Very extraordinary," said the nephew, in a tone in which his wounded feeling was very evident, "but if that be the case, I must do the best for myself that I can; at the same time I must say that your ideas are arbitrary; I knew nothing of these conditions, and I came to you in good faith. I wished to love you as a father, and to serve you as an obedient son; and fathers do not commonly impose wives upon their sons; besides," added he, cheerfully, as a new idea struck him; "how do you know that the young lady you have done me the honor of selecting for me would like me?"

"She would!" said the uncle; "she's a good girl; one just of your own sort; fond of Temperance Societies, and Ragged Schools, and such things. I don't know one like her."

"Well, sir," said the nephew, with half a smile on his lips, "if these be her recom-

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mendations, the girl that I wish to make my wife loves Temperance Societies and Ragged Schools, also."

"The devil take her!" said the uncle, in great wrath, for all at once he fancied it must be the daughter of some of those philanthropic people who had been so assiduously courting his nephew's acquaintance, and of whom he knew nothing, and taking up his bed-candlestick, he went to his room without another word.

The next morning his uncle, in a much kinder voice than he expected, told him that he had made an engagement for him to dine out with him on Christmas-day, which was on the morrow, and therefore he begged that he would be in readiness at the hour which he named. Edward was engaged already; he told his uncle so, and that in a voice of as much conciliation as possible. Another one drop to the full cup of his uncle's displeasure; and the cup as usual flowed over.

We said that a letter accompanied the hamper to Mrs Trevisham's this year; it did so; and a letter which occasioned some excitement and anxiety; it said that the friend

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who had had for some years the pleasure of sending this small present, proposed to eat the Christmas dinner with them on this occasion, and would also take the liberty of bringing a young friend with him. The hand-writing was unknown to them; it was a very different hand to that which had been familiar to Mrs. Trevisham in former days. Of course they would be very glad to see their kind unknown friend and his companion, yet still there was an undefinable anxiety in the bottom of their hearts as to who it would turn out to be. It was somebody who wished them well, no doubt; they only hoped that it would prove to be one from whom "they would *like* to receive a favor." We always feel anxious when a mystery, however small, is about to be solved. At all events they were glad that Edward Grey would be there; and let the unknown friend turn out to be whoever he might, they agreed that Kitty's engagement to Edward Grey should be made known to him.

The unknown friend, who had sent much more than his usual supply on this occasion, proposed to be with them for dinner at five.

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Edward Grey, however, was there by two, and great were the pains which he and Kitty took to make the little parlor look as pretty as possible, with its red-berried holly, ivy, and other evergreens. Though Mrs. Trevisham had only seventy pounds a-year, and the parlor was very small, yet this was one of the nicest little Christmas dinners that ever was set out or cooked. Mrs. Trevisham had got a neighbor who had been cook in a great family to come in for the day; and as to the table, it looked beautifully; there was a fine damask table-cloth on it with napkins as white as snow, and abundance of plate, which had belonged to the family in its better days, and bright glass and sparkling water, and hock and claret which had come among the good things in the last hamper. Bless me! there was dinner enough for a dozen people, and yet the unknown guest could only expect four! Mrs. Trevisham, however, expected five.

It grew dusk and then dark; the blinds were drawn down; it was nearly five, and the hearts of Mrs. Trevisham and her daughter beat anxiously; so, no doubt,

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would Edward Grey's, had he seen his uncle driving along the road towards the house in a cab, and in a very bad humor, although he meant to make himself very agreeable to the two ladies.

The cab stopped at the little green gate, and the house-door opened. It was a very undignified house; one was obliged to go through the kitchen into the parlor, but there was no avoiding it; so the little maid-servant stood with the door wide open, and Mrs. Trevisham saw that there was *one* guest instead of *two*, and that he was rather a stout gentleman, buttoned up to the chin in a great coat with a shawl round his neck. She had not the least idea who he was. She felt considerably excited, and he, we must confess, was rather so himself, and yet, as I have said twice before, he had fifteen hundred a-year, and he had paid for the dinner which he now came to eat.

Mrs. Trevisham stood at the parlor-door to receive him; he took off his hat in the kitchen, and stood with his uncovered and bald head before her. She saw at once who it was, her own old friend, the adversary

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of her husband; the uncle of her daughter's lover.

"I feel myself rather in an awkward position, my dear madam," he began; but no sooner had he uttered these words, than Edward Grey darted from the side of Kitty at the parlor fire, and seizing his hand exclaimed, "God bless you, my dear uncle, is it you?"

"And is this you, Edward? Good Heavens! how came you here?"

"I never was so glad in all my life," said Edward, helping his uncle off with his coat, for now a great light began to dawn into his mind. "I declare I don't know how to express my pleasure to think of meeting you under this roof, of all places in the world!"

"And to think of meeting *you* here," returned the uncle. "You must excuse me, my dear madam," said he, turning to Mrs. Trevisham; and he then sate down in a large chair by the fire, feeling almost overcome. Mrs. Trevisham was hardly less so.

"My good lady," at length he said, "I feel now as if I had done very wrong: I ought

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not to have been so abrupt. I have done the whole thing clumsily."

Mrs. Trevisham said truly that it gave her extreme pleasure to find that Mr. Hilyard had been their friend for so many years.

It was now Kitty's turn to come forward, for she recognized in him the kind visitor of the Ragged School.

His eyes glistened as he spoke to her, and then Edward was at her side; an irresistible power compelled him to speak.

"Uncle," said he, and as he spoke he took Kitty's hand; "we had made up our minds to be candid to-night, let the guest be who he might; and you, above all, have a right to know our secret. This is my affianced wife, let us have your blessing!"

The uncle took the two clasped hands in his, and pressed them warmly: but he said not a word.

Dinner was placed on the table. He still sate with their two hands in his; he wiped two great tears from his eyes, and then, in the cheerfulest voice possible, said, that now they would go to dinner, for that he was

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desperately hungry, and after dinner they would talk about these things.

After dinner, when the desert was on the table, how merry the uncle was at the expense of his nephew; and he told how he had "by chance" met with the doctor, and heard about Kitty and the Ragged School, and how he thought first of all of making her an offer himself, and then he thought of sending for his nephew, and then he warned Kitty that he was a very obstinate young man, and that he would not be guided by his good old uncle, who meant so well by him; and then Edward had to tell him how it was the losing of his watch, which brought him acquainted with Kitty, and how happy they had been ever since, with only one drawback, and that was, that his uncle was such a hasty-tempered positive man, who would not allow his nephew, who wished to be so dutiful to him, the right to choose a wife for himself, and how this said wicked uncle had nearly broken his nephew's heart by quarrelling with him about his intended wife.

There was a deal of laughter and merriment though it was only a party of four;

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nor was there a Christmas party, high or low, throughout England, where there was more true-love and kind-heartedness to be found.

After this day the course of this true-love was so exceedingly smooth and sunshiny, that it certainly would have become monotonous, had not Mr. Joseph Hilyard insisted on a wedding by way of variety; so the wedding was held in May.

The young people lived in a small, but handsome house, not far from the uncle's large square one. Mrs. Trevisham still kept on the cottage, though she was not much there, for Kitty and her husband insisted on her being mostly with them. Very often too Mr. Hilyard was there; and as he had of late grown so wise as not to care for what people might say when a good action was in question, he made up his mind to persuade the widow Trevisham to give up her cottage altogether, and remove to his large, square house in the character of his wife. We believe that the wedding-dinner, and the Christmas dinner will be eaten together on this present 25th of December.

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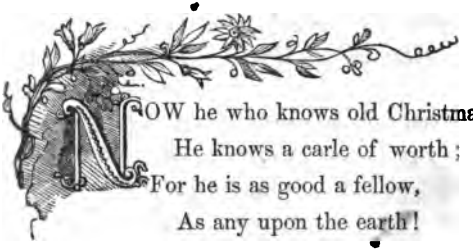
OLD CHRISTMAS.



NOW he who knows old Christmas,
He knows a carle of worth;
For he is as good a fellow,
As any upon the earth!

He comes warm cloked and coated,
And buttoned up to the chin,
And soon as he comes a-nigh the door,
We open and let him in.

We know that he will not fail us,
So we sweep the hearth up clean;
We set him the old arm chair,
And a cushion whereon to lean.

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And with sprigs of holly and ivy
We make the house look gay,
Just out of an old regard to him,—
For it was his ancient way.

We broach the strong ale barrel,
And bring out wine and meat;
And thus have all things ready,
Our dear old friend to greet.

And soon as the time wears round,
The good old carle we see,
Coming a-near;—for a creditor
Less punctual is than he!

He comes with a cordial voice
That does one good to hear;
He shakes one heartily by the hand,
As he hath done many a year.

And after the little children
He asks in a cheerful tone,
Jack, Kate, and little Annie,—
He remembers them every one!

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What a fine old fellow he is!
With his faculties all as clear,
And his heart as warm and light
As a man in his fortieth year!

What a fine old fellow, in troth!
Not one of your griping elves,
Who, with plenty of money to spare,
Think only about themselves!

Not he! for he loveth the children;
And holiday begs for all;
And comes with his pockets full of gifts,
For the great ones and the small!

With a present for every servant;—
For in giving he doth not tire;—
From the red-faced, jovial butler,
To the girl by the kitchen-fire.

And he tells us witty old stories;
And singeth with might and main;
And we talk of the old man's visit
Till the day that he comes again!

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Oh, he is a kind, old fellow
For though that beef be dear,
He giveth the parish paupers
A good dinner once a year!

And all the workhouse children
He sets them down in a row,
And giveth them rare plum-pudding,
And two-pence a-piece also.

Oh, could you have seen those paupers
Have heard those children young,
You would wish with them that Christmas
Came often and tarried long!

He must be a rich old fellow,—
What money he gives away!
There is not a lord in England
Could equal him any day!

Good luck unto old Christmas,
And long life let us sing,
For he doth more good unto the poor
Than many a crowned king!

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TWO FRIENDS' COUNSEL.

"I SHALL never be happier than I now am, and nobody on earth can be!" exclaimed Helena, with real delight, and full of youthful gladness, when she found herself for the first time quietly at home in her own pretty house by the side of her Albert, after all the marriage festivities and visiting were over.

These words, uttered by a young, lovely, and beloved wife, who was really worth loving, might well sound de-

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lightfully in the ears of the young married man, and find a charming response in his heart. He could not, indeed, say a word, for joy. He pressed his wife speechlessly to his breast, and a moment of silence, pure and heavenly as the stars in the firmament, succeeded. After this the young, happy couple, began to talk, to joke, and laugh merrily. Ah! they had hitherto had so little opportunity for so doing! They both of them belonged to the middle classes of society, and it was not in the free unconstrained life of a country town that their love had sprung up and grown to its now blossoming state, but within the walls of the capital, where there is more of compulsion, etiquette, rules and regulations, customs and usages, which everybody *must* inevitably follow, than of stone and brickwork.

The two young people had known one another almost from their earliest childhood, but had scarcely ever until this very moment, been able, freely and uninterruptedly, to converse with each other, and they now enjoyed the happiness of their freedom more than two birds of the wood, which, after

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having been confined in a cage, from which they had escaped, now can fly about from tree to tree, seeking their own food, twittering and singing, meeting or separating, to find companionship with other birds, or doing whatever they liked best. Besides their freedom, they also equally enjoyed their solitude, and they both agreed that they would not at this moment be king and queen over a whole nation, if they must be subjected to the constant attendance of a gazing and listening court.

"Our kingdom is that of love and devotion to each other," said Albert; "and our attendants are little invisible genii, with bows and arrows, who flutter around us, and whisper to each other about a time when they shall become visible;" with that he pressed a kiss upon his wife's lips, and then again there occurred a blissful silence, and then again they laughed and talked. How lightly passed those first days of a happiness which seemed as though it never could become dimmed!

All outward circumstances seemed to have contributed to fulfil their happiness. They

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belonged to the same class of society, and possessed the same set of ideas; they had been brought up in the same opinions; they were most accordant in age; they were equally amiable, the one as the other; equally beloved and envied; they were neither rich nor poor; but their property, of which the greater part was Albert's, when united, like their hearts, made together *a whole* which was by no means to be despised. Their relations on both sides were perfectly satisfied with the match, and, beside this, none of their relations had anything to do in bringing it about; it had been entirely the work of the young couple themselves; but still, for all that, they had as yet had but little time for intercourse with each other.

They had on both sides numerous relations; brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles, and friends and acquaintances without number; visiting, therefore, and the duties of society, had left them only brief moments in which they had been able to congratulate themselves on being alone. Their glances had been in those days their best mode of intercourse, and what they

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knew about each other was mostly from third persons; and what they heard was this: "He is an uncommonly agreeable, well-educated, clever, and excellent young man," was said of Albert; and "What a sweet, lovely, good, unpretending, kind, well-behaved, accomplished, and well brought-up girl is that Helena!" said they of her; and that was all they mutually knew, because their own eyes had, for a long time at least, never said anything else than that they loved each other with all the youthful fervor of affection.

Now, however, they were united; now they began to talk and think as much as they liked; now they had reached that goal about which they had dreamed so often, and beyond which there was something more and still more. Now commenced, for the first time, confidence and unrestrained intercourse, and their opinions and reflections rushed like a foaming river over soul and heart to meet one another, and they felt the most unspeakable happiness when they found that these harmonized, and did not break into those dissonances which so often happen when a

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married couple have been brought up in a dissimilar way, or have belonged to different circles or classes of society. There was, however, in this case, no danger of that kind; for even if Albert's and Helena's ideas had varied a little on minor points, they agreed entirely on more important and greater subjects in all that give coloring and tone to life.

And now, in the first place, they began to talk about how amiable, how agreeable, how excellent, some of their acquaintance, relations, and friends were; but how tiresome, disagreeable, and unbearable were others. They were nearly always of the same opinion in this comparison of their ideas; and it not unfrequently happened that one of them exclaimed, especially when the other had let fall a disparaging remark respecting some third person—

"Oh, really, do *you* think so? *That* has been always my opinion, but I fancied that your taste was quite different." "Yes!" the other would reply, "one must disguise one's feelings in this world; one must put on such a mask sometimes, that even those one loves

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most cannot recognize one." And with that both of them agreed that *now* they were unspeakably happy, because now in this, as in every other respect, they could throw aside the iron mask of disguise, and at least to each other, speak, think, and dream aloud. And, acting on this belief, the most perfect confidence existed between the young couple, who all at once thus found the most glorious thing which life can offer—friendship in love.

But it must not by any means be imagined that our young couple sat entirely at home, cooing like a pair of turtle-doves. No; far from that. Albert was manager of some works, and had so much employment that he was compelled to spend the first part of every day away from home. Helena had a thousand of those small duties to attend to which society demands from those who live in it; she had to go and see her own dear and excellent parents; and her father and mother-in-law; and to look in and see how the aunt was who was poorly; and the cousin who was just going to be married, and who wanted a little advice; and to whom

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she, who was married, could give a little; and, besides this, she had a world of cares in her own new home, as well as that she was incessantly visited by relations, friends, and acquaintances; so that Albert, when he came home and found Helena alone, made a great leap out of sheer delight, and Helena danced round or with him from the same feeling; because, though friends and acquaintances were right good things in themselves, yet solitude with each other was best of all; and then they had a thousand communications to make to one another which always furnished subjects for laughter and merriment through the rest of the day;—and let moralists say what they will, laughter and merriment uphold love,—that is *our* opinion.

In the evening they often went out into company, and always took care not to be too much absorbed by one another there, that they might not be as ridiculous as some married people who are sparing enough of love at home, in order that they may parade it when others can see.

"Ah!" Helena would often say, when they came home from a ball, "how I should have

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liked to have danced a few times with you, as I used to do! It would have been infinitely more entertaining than with those that I care nothing about; but it was better not, else they might have said that one of us was jealous, or that we both were, or that we only wanted to show to everybody how much we thought of one another, or some other folly which one cannot guess at."

But it was precisely because the young couple could not have as much of each other's society as they themselves desired, that these moments for intercourse were so much desired by them, and so delightful at the same time. They had both of them, also, been brought up by excellent and pious parents, and had been taught from their childhood to go to church on the Sabbath, and there before the Most High to examine themselves and to offer up their prayers and praises; now, therefore, they failed not of this duty, but spite of etiquette they sat by each other's side, and Albert, unobserved, held Helena's hand in his whilst their beloved minister poured forth his eloquent addresses, to the edification of all who heard

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him, and who treasured them in their hearts. Albert and Helena did so, indeed, and when some passage occurred in the discourse which particularly touched their young hearts, they pressed each other's hand, and stole a glance of the most angelic purity from each other's eyes.

One day they had listened to an excellent discourse, in which the preacher had shown that the rich man in his splendor, and the beggar in his rags, are both alike in the eye of God; and that in the great day of reckoning, the rich will have dearly to answer for the hardness, pride, and disdain with which they have looked down upon those who wander through life depressed by misery and want, but who, perhaps, on that day, may be placed far above them.

"How beautiful!—how divine!" said Helena to Albert, as they left the church, "how full of kindness and pity one feels towards want and distress, and how mean one's own little pride and importance seems after hearing such a heart-touching discourse as this;" and, so saying, she took Albert's arm, and they walked homeward.

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"Turn a little to the left," whispered she, after they had gone a short distance; "I see an old schoolfellow of mine there to the right, whom I don't want to meet. She looks so shabby and wretched in that miserable old cloak and bonnet."

"Is there anything disreputable about her?" inquired Albert.

"No, certainly not," replied Helena; "but her mother, who is a widow, and had a little property, lost it all through a bankruptcy, and now they maintain themselves by needlework."

"Ah! Helena," said Albert, "don't be displeased if I remind you of the beautiful discourse we have just heard."

Without replying a single word to Albert's gentle remark, she pressed his arm to her heart, and drew him with her exactly to that opposite right hand side which she had wished to avoid, and was quickly by the side of her old scholfellow.

"Good day, dear Anna," said she, and touched the poor young girl in the shabby cloak, so that she should turn round to her.

Anna looked at her in astonishment. It

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was so long since any of her more fortunate schoolfellows had been willing to recognize her. She scarcely knew whether to trust her own eyes, when she saw Helena on the arm of her husband. Anna returned Helena's salutation with great embarrassment and surprise, and not without a sigh for her poor bonnet and cloak, and walked on beside the young couple.

"Dear Anna," said Helena, "your way home passes my new house; it is not late, and your mother will not expect you so soon; you shall now go with us, and see how comfortably my good Albert and I have got things."

Albert now pressed Helena's arm to his breast; but Anna thought, "Ah she only wants to show me all her grandeur!" She went on with them, however, mechanically, partly out of a little curiosity, partly out of that want of independence which is so often the unfortunate consequence of extreme poverty, which makes the poor fancy that they are obliged to obey the rich.

A hasty and unpleasant thought, not altogether unlike Anna's, passed through Albert's

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mind; and he feared that possibly a little vanity might enter into Helena's invitation to the poor girl to accompany her to her new home. At the door of the house, however, he left them, under the pretence of a visit which he had to make, but in reality to give Helena an opportunity of showing in some way that wealth and avarice are not synonymous.

"Look, Anna," said Helena, when they had entered the house, "how nicely my kind, dear Albert has had everything done for me. Look, how comfortable, and convenient all is, and how I have everything here which one can desire to make one's life comfortable and happy."

"Yes! God knows that!" replied Anna, in that mournful tone which we should not err greatly in calling envious, and which the poverty-stricken observer of luxury and wealth almost always, and very excusably, feel something of; "now," continued the poor young woman, "here you can live like pearls and gold, and never once know what want is."

"Ah, Anna!" replied Helena, "you are

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unjust both to my Albert and myself to think so. It is precisely *here*, in this warm, convenient, handsome, and, in every respect comfortable room, that we continually talk and think about the less fortunate than ourselves, and grieve that we are not able to make them partakers with us, and that partly from one reason and partly from another, among which vanity, avarice, or egotism are not the least. You see, this is what we acknowledge to one another with sorrow, and it may in some measure correct our fault; but we soon fall into it again, and yet, as I hope, each time less deeply than before."

"Oh you are just the same good-hearted girl that you used to be at school," said Anna, bursting into tears, and she had a presentiment that her former playfellow had not only delayed her there to show her something of her abundance, but also to bestow a little of it upon herself; and Anna was so poor, and had been reduced so low, had striven both with hunger, want of clothing, and many another want, both for herself and her old mother, that all assumption, all pride

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was gone from her, and she was ready to receive, with gladness and gratitude, whatever the more fortunate friends of her childhhod would bestow upon her.

"How is your mother?" asked Helena, who wished to make good use of the time they were alone together; "She is still poorly and infirm, and her income is lessened as I grieved to hear; you have then some difficulty, dear Anna, in getting the little matters which are necessary to dress and all that. Come now with me into my bedroom, and see how plentifully I have been furnished with all sorts of things for my marriage—yes, indeed, so many, that I never shall manage to wear them out before they are old-fashioned," and so saying, Helena took out from her wardrobe a very pretty cloak and a bonnet such as Anna might show herself in anywhere; and besides these, a dress or two, as well as collars, handkerchiefs, and such like.

Anna could not believe her own eyes; she could scarcely thank her for those bountiful gifts! but Helena who now heard Albert in the outer room, put all the things together in

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haste, with some white manchet bread, confectionary, gingerbread, and such like, in a large shawl, which she tied together by the corners.

"Now, my cook shall go with you, and carry this for you, because she is not wanted here, as we dine with papa and mamma, to-day; and now we will just lay the bundle aside, because I hear Albert coming."

Helena spoke in a whisper, and turned aside, for now Albert came in, and although she and Anna hurried away the bundle, still he saw it, though he pretended not to do so. Anna took her leave, and in consequence of Albert's presence was spared all the grateful thanks she would otherwise have given, and followed by the cook and the bundle, she took her leave; and her grateful, tear-filled eyes as she departed, and Albert's silent embrace, when she was gone, made Helena gay and happy the whole day.

Sometimes it happened that Helena detected little faults and weaknesses in Albert also, but not very often, for the sake of preserving happiness and unity, because while a woman can bear to be reminded a hundred times of

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her faults by the man she loves, he does not like to be told even once of his, at least in a direct way, and therefore it is that woman makes use of little arts of cunning, and sets about it in little roundabout ways which are necessary for the preservation of a good understanding.

In this manner passed the first autumn of Albert's and Helena's marriage; so also the winter and spring; and when summer came, and all was glad and full of increase, there was a prospect of increase also in the household of our young married pair. Albert was overjoyed at the thought; in the estimation of both, nothing but a little lovely child, be it son or daughter, was wanted to make their happiness perfect.

Helena was uncommonly well all this time; not peevish and nervous as some *are*, and others think they *must be*, in order to be interesting, but which, on the contrary, frequently is the occasion of the first discords in the marriage harmony. There are few things which put a husband so out of humor as the nervousness and peevishness of a wife, especially when they are artificial,

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even if he do not suspect such a thing, for then they are most insufferable, because they court observation, whilst those who really suffer, most frequently strain every nerve to endure it patiently and silently. (This last recipe we recommend to everybody, and to the married woman in particular.) It is true that if Helena, at any time, looked pale, or a little out of sorts, Albert was inconsolable; and when, at length, she only left her home for a daily drive, he himself assisted her in and out of the carriage; nor would anything during this time induce him to stay away from home, after the hours which his business demanded.

During this time, also, Albert and Helena enjoyed in a high degree a pleasure which, until now, they had never been able to afford themselves. In the long winter evenings he read unceasingly aloud to his young wife, and they were both delighted,—not, it is true, with everything they read, because they had, both of them, very good judgment and pure taste,—but that they nearly always agreed in their praise or blame, in their likings or dislikings.

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"How beautiful that is!—how excellent!" Helena would exclaim sometimes, and Albert's assenting glance, without interrupting his reading, proved how entirely he was of her opinion. "How stupid that is,—how poor and disgusting!" she would say at another time; and Albert had merely waited for these words from her lips before he threw the book at the wall—always an irresistible impulse when one reads a bad book, and which explains the reason why bad books are just as much soiled, broken-backed, and dog-eared as good books which are much read. Far from throwing *Det går an** at the wall, they read it through and talked it well over, but the great author of that work must pardon us if we acknowledge that they, in the midst of their happiness and love, altogether condemned his book; and they could not conceive how the same masterhand who wrote "The Chapel," could paint such "a picture from life" as this was. Yet, what does it signify? There are very few who condemn the book from the same cause

* See the translation of the Swedish story, No. 1, in No. 40 of this journal.—M. H.

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as these two, namely, that they themselves were speaking proofs of its condemnation.

But now the great catastrophe approached which is so important in the history of a new married life,—now the day was at hand which should give to Albert and Helena a son or a daughter.

The hour was come. Albert was almost out of his mind with anxiety, on account of his wife. He was one of those kind, amiable, thoroughly good-natured creatures, who are thinly sown, not one of those strong, resolute characters, firm as a rock, who are still more rarely to be met with, and the strings of whose souls neither suffering nor adversity can break, can only, on the contrary, cause them to vibrate the louder. In proportion as Albert had suffered, was the greatness of his joy when the nurse came and announced to him that he was the father of a healthy, charming, little daughter. He was now almost beside himself with delight, he sprung up and embracing the old woman herself, exclaimed, although he had hitherto wished for a son, "Just as good—I

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would as soon have a daughter—so that Helena is but out of danger!"

Helena *was* out of danger; for hours her husband sat beside her as she slept, never moving himself, nor making the least noise all the time, never once creaking his boots, striking his chair against the wall, nor dropping anything on the floor; neither coughing nor blowing his nose, all of which was so admirable in a gentleman, that we can do no other than mention it—than write down this entirely unusual and unheard-of circumstance—this proof of his unusual and unheard-of devotion to his little wife.

The baby had not been born a very long time before the father had it in his arms, rejoicing over it, and greatly admiring it, and holding it all the time *tant bien que mal* we are afraid.

"What in heaven's name are you doing?" exclaimed the nurse, hurrying into the room where she heard the little creature crying. "My goodness! but that will never do!" said she in great trouble when she saw Albert holding the poor little thing with its feet higher than its head. "For Heaven's sake

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let the baby alone; gentlemen don't know how to handle such little dears!" and with these words, and many others, the baby was carried off to its cradle. Helena was as much overjoyed with her little daughter as Albert, it was always at her side, greatly to her husband's distress, who feared lest it should fatigue her too much. But she seemed scarcely to notice or trouble herself about anything beside.

Helena was soon up and well again; and then great was the stir in the house, and the cleaning and the preparation for the christening. Albert spent as much time as he possibly could with his wife, and laughed at her no little for being so incessantly occupied with the child. He could not help wishing within himself that "this troublesome christening" were over, so that things might again fall into their old course, and when Helena need no longer sit for whole days beside the cradle.

Poor Albert! he troubled himself exceedingly about this; and nothing *did* again fall into its old course. The little one was christened with four or five names, and had as

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many godfathers and godmothers as filled the drawing-room, not to mention those at a distance, who had merely written. There was Rhine wine, and confectionary, in abundance.

The nurse was dismissed with fifty thalers banco, for which she made fifty curtseys; the visitors decreased in number; quietness began to reign again in the house, and Albert began to breathe more freely, but Helena still sat for whole days beside the little cradle, and Albert, glad at all events, to be rid of the bustle and disturbance in the house, and to be once more quiet with his wife, often sat with her. In the beginning he thought it very amusing; after a few days, however, he said that it made him quite hoarse to *talk softly* and in a *whisper*, which Helena required him to do through the whole day, lest he should wake little Milla.

"Now Milla is as sound asleep as a little sucking pig," Albert would say sometimes, "let Caroline sit and watch beside the cradle, and you can come out into the drawing-room, and then we can have a little reading together, or you can play and sing to me, for

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it is so long since I heard you—the piano has not been opened these many weeks.

To all this Helena would answer with a look, which became comic from pure astonishment, "I leave Milla to go and play and sing, and wake her up just when she is asleep! Are you out of your senses, good Albert?" said she, shuddering at the thought of such high-treason against Milla.

Albert laughed. "Well, then," said Albert, "when she wakes, you can do it."

"I, go and leave Milla, when she is awake, and turn her over to that hard-hearted creature, Caroline! No! Certainly not!" exclaimed she, still more overcome by astonishment at what seemed to her Albert's insane proposal.

Albert renewed his attempts many times, and always thought, "Well, let it be,—Helena will soon be tired of sitting there the whole day through." But Helena did not get tired—*that* was poor Albert's part of the business. And now little Milla became peevish and cross, especially at night, so that poor Helena could get no sleep; and when Albert himself had been kept awake for several

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nights in succession, she had made a bed up for him in his little library, so that he need not be kept awake unnecessarily. This arrangement did not please him; but still he was obliged to confess that Helena was right, that there was no advantage to be gained, but the very opposite, by his lying awake, when he could not do the least good either to Milla or herself, but was made heavy and sleepy through the whole of the following day; so Albert removed to the library, but not without earnestly beseeching of Helena, that for heaven's and his sake, she would spare herself a little, and endeavor to get some sleep, and have more confidence in Caroline, or else get some one else on whom she could depend. Helena assented to all this, but she did it not. And now that Albert was out of the way, and no longer lay and looked on, she felt as if she were at liberty to act as she pleased; so she was up the greater part of the night, carrying about and pacifying the child, which only cried more and more; and then, when at length it slept, she herself lay and wept, because she thought it was ill, and perhaps might die.

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How much she suffered from all this; how she grew pale and thin, may be easily imagined; and the gay merriment, the mirthful laughter with which she used to meet Albert, were all gone. On the contrary, now, she never did meet him, for she was no longer in the drawing-room, nor in the parlor, nor yet in the little favorite sitting-room, but in the darkened bed-room, and there she spent all her days. Nor was she visible at dinner; at that time she was not dressed, or "Milla was crying just then," or Helena was asleep; and, under existing circumstances, this last was what Albert heard of with pleasure, because he hoped that by this means good would result both to mother and child; that they would be strengthened and made comfortable, and thus "everything be as it was formerly;" for that was a point of light—the only one in Albert's thoughts and anticipations.

His meals, which in that former time were so excellent and ch erful, were now solitary, silent, and short; and the dishes which were served, and of which he now so rarely partook in the presence of his young wife, who

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had so soon learned his peculiar tastes, were not often to his liking. Helena was never seen out of the house, and she always begged of her husband to take his walks alone, and never to refuse any invitation on her account. At first she had made this request in vain; he had no pleasure in going without her; but when, as she would not go out he obeyed her wishes, she felt hurt, and shed many tears.

It was now winter; the evenings were long and dark, and often tedious to her;; sometimes Milla slept; she herself could not do so, but walked up and down the dark drawing-room, listening to every sound, whether it might not be Albert; but he came not, or if he did come, he often found traces of tears upon her cheeks. When these had to be explained, they were always attributed to anxiety respecting Milla; but they did not all come from that source, though she said so. When Albert was away, and often did not return for many hours, now and then little tormenting suggestions, which had hitherto been as still as the dead in their graves, arose in her mind. She began to

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fancy that Albert was gay, and full of animation, as his temperament was by nature, when with other people, whilst at home with her he was anxious and dejected. She called to mind some little circumstances in his earlier life, which since their marriage he had related to her, and of which at the time she took no heed. She remembered also, that he had said, in speaking of a certain lady, who had the power of attracting all young fellows' hearts to her, on purpose to jilt them, "I, myself, for a little while, was desperately in love with her!" Helena, when he told her this, began to weep at the very thought of his having loved anybody but her, at which Albert laughed, and assured her, that the love which he had for this lady, and that which he had felt for his own Helena, were as different as light and darkness. Helena had been consoled by these words, and had laughed at her "needless tears," as she herself called them. But, now, during those long solitary hours, when she knew that her husband was again in brilliant society, among dozens of ladies, who would like nothing better than to get this amiable young

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man within their trammels, and who assuredly would spare no pains to do so, now that Helena was out of the way, those unfortunate words of his, "I, myself, for a little while, was desperately in love with her!" again haunted her fancy, and with them came the saddest, the ugliest, the darkest, the most dangerous of all spectres of the mind—jealousy!—there it stood, suggesting to her that what had *once* been, might be again. This heart-torturing thought sent floods of tears to her eyes; and as she often thought that it was a sin to shed those tears over little Milla, when she lay, sweetly and calmly sleeping in her cradle, she hastened to her chamber, when she heard her husband coming, and pretended to sleep, in order to conceal from his knowledge her red and tear-swollen eyes. When she was asleep, or seemed to be sleeping, Albert left the room, or if it were not too late in the evening, went out of the house. Helena fancied that she could read in this an increasing coldness towards herself. "Formerly," thought she, "he never would have done in this way; formerly, he would have sat silently by my

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side, till I had awoke;" and with this her tears streamed anew. When the heart begins, regretfully, to say, "Formerly it was not thus," then it suffers bitterly.

Helena, however, did not remark how unhappy her husband was all this time, precisely because he endeavored as much as possible to conceal his suffering from her; and he and her own mother, and other of her friends, puzzled their brains in vain, to find out some means of remedying the evil, which seemed to increase every day; for the more Helena wept, the more restless became little Milla, and all this added to the trouble. Albert wished to call in physicians, that he might consult with them; so did Helena's mother; but she herself, who best knew what the cause of the malady was, persuaded them to be satisfied with the old family doctor, and he could not find that anything was amiss, either with mother or child. He did, however, what medical gentlemen are obliged to do when they are called in unnecessarily; he felt the pulse, looked at the tongue, imagined that a little cold had been taken, prescribed the wearing of flannel and keeping the feet

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warm, staying in her house for a few days, being careful as to what was eaten, keeping the mind free from excitement, going early to bed, etc.; and, in order to satisfy Albert and her mother, he wrote a prescription for some innocent mixture, which should be taken two or three time a-day. This unfortunate bottle of mixture next became a subject of strife between the anxious young husband and his wife. He fancied that all possible advantages lay in the draught, and she cared no more for it than for the snow-flakes which filled the air. He besought her to take it regularly; she objected, saying that it did her no good, but only made her feel squeamish and poorly; and, at last, when they had had a long contest on this subject, he called her *obstinate* and *troublesome*, and that with a good deal of temper, going out of the house at the same time, and shutting the door after him with more violence than common.

"Now I see it plain enough; now I know it perfectly!" said Helena, to herself, bursting into tears, "Albert loves me no longer! Some other one has possession of the heart

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which formerly was mine, and for which I would have given the whole world!" and with this her heart felt ready to break. She could not think of complaining to her mother, who was nervous, and in bad health; but she must pour out her misery to somebody. Milla was sound asleep; she threw on, therefore, almost without reflection, her pelisse and bonnet, and, while she is hastening along some short-cuts and back streets with which she is acquainted, we will give a little description of the person whom she was about to visit.

She was an elderly unmarried lady, first cousin to Helena, and for whom she had always entertained the greatest possible esteem, in whom she was now about to place her entire confidence. This cousin, Mary Ann, even in her youth, had, as it were, been shut up within herself, at first with a certain degree of submission, gentleness, and piety; but, *now*, in her increasing years, with a something of spiritual pride about her—a something of religious hauteur, which caused her to look down with a certain disdain upon that world which always treated her with indifference.

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She had a keen, penetrating glance—a certain degree of cunning and quickness, which by many people is called *genius*, because people are so ready in the application of this word, where the reality is wanting, and so reluctant to allow it when it is sometimes found. What was her own opinion on this subject, we know not; but her manner of laying down her opinion; of giving advice or directions; of never allowing herself to be detected in the slightest error, ignorance, or want of judgment; of only smiling, if any lady proved to her, as clear as daylight, that she was wrong, leaving it to them to call it conceding the fact, or just what they pleased, —in all this there was a something which might be called, the having a high opinion of herself. But, wonderful enough, nobody did call it so. She awoke no spark of envy or indignation, and she succeeded in making almost everybody talk about her religious zeal; her deep, clear understanding; her solid and varied knowledge (for she had read and worked in the book line through the whole of her long and undisturbed life); about her great ability in writing down her

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thoughts; her skill in painting portraits (astonishing likenesses, but horribly ugly); of her steadfastness in keeping her word; her fidelity in friendship; her never betraying confidence; her renunciation of self; her devotion to others; her undeviating adherence to principle;—all this was spoken of, and at the same time testimony was borne to her tenderness; her quiet piety; her warm, sympathizing heart; her goodness, gentleness, and forbearance towards others, as well as her severity towards herself; and, above all, her beautiful irreproachable life,—for it was impossible to charge anything against her; in some respects, too, she followed the rule of the Scriptures, for she fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and comforted the suffering in every way in her power,—and that was many, for she lived very quietly and economically with an old mother, who never having been very bright in her mind, had now sunk into second childhood. As this old lady was never seen, her requirings could not be very great; nor were Mary Ann's either; and thus at least two-thirds of her income were devoted to works of charity. If any-

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body were in want, they went to her; if they were in trouble, she sought to comfort them; and if she did not, then nobody could; did any one want good advice, they asked it from her, and it was not her fault that it was so seldom followed, because of all the people who ask advice, very few follow any but their own.

Albert during his betrothal when he was first introduced into the circle of Helena's relations, out of which Mary Ann seldom went, had been by no means favorably impressed with the new cousin whose dogmatic and solemn manner displeased him, and before he had discovered how highly she was thought of by all her relatives, he had said to Helena, "There is something very like an old Carmelite in Mary Ann, with her solemn grimaces, in that everlasting brown gown, brown shawl, and brown bonnet!" Helena, however, laid her hand on his lips, and besought him by all that was sacred, never to utter such an unfavorable judgment, and attempted to make him understand how ill it would be taken, and how highly Mary Ann was esteemed by them all. Albert

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laughed and was silent, but afterwards when Helena was his own, and they could converse freely on all subjects, they had, with the greatest secresy, come to the agreement that she was a pattern of all virtues, and all discretions, a saint, a burning and a shining light, but a very tiresome person.

When Helena was married, she received from friends and relations an unheard-of number of presents and keepsakes. Mary Ann had also distinguished herself at that time—she gave to Albert a portrait of Helena, very well painted by herself, and "very like," as all the world said, to which Albert always softly added, "Yes, when she is fifteen years older," because, though the features were indisputably like, the portrait was of a much older person. Albert set no store by the picture, and only brought it out when some one particularly wished to see it. To Helena she gave a very beautiful bible, with a cover worked in beads by her own hands, (for she could do everything,) and upon which Helena set the highest value. Besides this, she had worked on a footstool in black velvet, with silver, a design of Faith, Hope,

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and Charity, and in presenting it she had held a long and beautiful discourse on the necessity of bending the knees in prayer, and this black footstool was to serve for this purpose. But as Albert's and Helena's prayers were too earnest and simple, and came too directly from the heart, to need the aid of a cushion or stool, and as the setting their feet upon it was a thing not to be thought of, it was set aside in a corner, and no use made of it whatever, except that Albert always called it the Catholic, or the Monk. That the young couple in their childish merriment often made a joke over the black velvet stool and poor cousin Mary Ann, as well as many another thing, will easily be understood.

And it was now to this same lady that Helena directed her steps. The young wife's trouble had placed Mary Ann in a new light, and she thought that from her she should get counsel, comfort, and all that she lacked. The room which Mary Ann inhabited, had a singular appearance. It was large, lofty, and dark, which last circumstance was owing to her keeping the lower shutters closed, so that the light was admitted only from

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above, which was desirable on account of the lady's paintings, of which a great array filled one side of the room. A large, brown book-case, the doors of which were wide open, one stood on legs between the windows, instead of the customary looking glass, table or chef-fonier. On one side of the room were ranged eight or ten little stools in a circle, and on these lay portions of children's clothes of coarse material, which would be made up by poor little girls, who at certain hours came nither for instruction in needle-work. The clothes were thus made up for children poorer than themselves.

Before a large old-fashioned writing-table covered with books and papers, sat the thin, little dried-up lady, almost buried in a large and very substantial chair. Her back was turned to the door as Helena entered, and as the tall back and sides of the chair prevented her seeing without she had left her seat, she inquired "Who is there?" and as Helena gave no answer, she repeated her question. Without making any reply, Helena stood before the table.

"Ah! it is my young friend!" exclaimed

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Mary Ann at the sight of her. "How are you? What can have brought the young, happy lady to old Mary Ann?"

These words, "the happy young lady," were said with a certain emphasis, which immediately and unpleasantly reminded Helena that her cousin had often, during the early part of her marriage said in a bewailing tone, when she saw their happiness, "Ah! that will not always last. Sorrow and trouble will also have their time! People flee from them as long as they can, but in the end they overtake them."

"Ah, dear Mary Ann," said Helena, "I am come to you to ———," more she could not say, but burst into violent tears.

"Yes, yes, my dear child," said Mary Ann solemnly, "I expected this, but it grieves me that it should have come so soon, that my presentiment, my great knowledge of human nature, should unfortunately have been so true in this. Happiness and mirth are yours no longer—is it not so? And now you are come to a friend in whose bosom you can confide all the troubles of your soul, and from whom you can look for comfort and

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counsel. But," added she, casting up her eyes, "I have only one advice to give, one consolation to offer, and that is the heavenly manna which is to be found in prayer."

"Ah, Mary Ann," said Helena, weeping, "believe not but that I have prayed. I have gone down on my knees many and many a time, and besought the Almighty to give me again the calm, beautiful, and pure joy which was mine, but now which seems to fly farther from me every day."

"No, my beloved cousin," said Mary Ann, "*that* is not what you must pray for; nor is that the *manner*. Do you not believe that God knows what is good for you? He lays no burden of sorrow upon you which has not a high purpose to serve. No, my dear child; of this be sure, sorrow and trial never come without our having deserved them, or without their being intended for our eternal welfare; and, therefore, in prayer we must only ask for grace, for strength, for courage and steadfastness to suffer; and, besides this, we must bear in mind, every day and every moment, how the Son of God suffered and was tormented; and this will make our little

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afflictions and sorrows seem small, indeed—vanish into nothing, like a drop of water in the sea."

There was a degree of truth, certainly, in these words; but, ah! they did not console Helena. She did not find that which, without she had properly explained herself, she sought,—which was, advice how to regain the former and lost happiness by the side of her—now more than ever beloved—husband. But Helena was such a good, pure, and open spirit, that when she did not meet with all she sought for, she took what she found. She was convinced that there was a deal of truth in much that Mary Ann had said, and she listened to her as she went on with animation and earnestness, because she spoke really from the conviction of her mind. She took certain views of the duties of life and religion, and she succeeded in instilling them into the mind of Helena. She read and explained to her, in her own way, long passages out of books of devotion, which she assured her would edify and console her, if she only properly impressed them upon her

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heart. Helena promised to do so, and then directly put the question to her friend, as to what were the means she should use to win back the affection of her husband.

The cousins now talked together, and a certain mode of conduct was decided upon, the effect of which will be seen presently.

After this time Helena wept more than ever, and as a matter of course Milla cried in proportion, whilst poor Albert's heart ached to see his young wife wearing herself away day by day, and never meeting him but with the request that they might pray together for grace and mercy! And this, all the time with never-ceasing tears. Albert, who would do anything to gratify her, said, however, that formerly they used to be extremely happy without tears, and without "incessantly wearying heaven with prayers and lamentations." That was Albert's expression, and with that he walked away. Poor Helena, in the nervous and suspicious state into which she had worked herself, she fancied that she saw in this, anger and ridicule. Her tears flowed afresh, she was sincerely un-

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happy. Mary Ann came to comfort her, and things grew worse and worse.

During this time Christmas, January and February had passed. The sun of March began to shine with all its cheerfulness, awakening and giving life; and when Helena's eyes were free from tears she sate in the light of this March sun working with the greatest industry at a handsome piece of worsted work which was to cover a large and comfortable chair, with which she wished to surprise and gladden her beloved husband, whose affections she fancied she had lost forever, on his birth-day, which was at the end of March. The first green leaf of the lily of consolation began to spring forth in her heart, at the very time when she was forming with her needle those flowers for *him*, whose whole life she would strew with flowers if she only knew how.

Milla was now half a year old, and often very sweet and quiet. Just at this time, too, Mary Ann was very much occupied with comforting and advising, as she said, some other people, and therefore could not be so much with Helena. Helena's tears flowed

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less frequently, and this employment of working the chair for Albert amused her, although in his presence,—for this work was done in secret—she looked as anxious and as inaccessible as ever. One day, when Mary Ann called, she was looking much more cheerful than usual; Mary Ann was now her only friend, for her doleful weeping and secluded life had frightened away all her other young relatives and acquaintance, and now, therefore, after telling her that she was beginning to be reconciled to her fate, she asked her advice as to the best way of celebrating Albert's birthday. Mary Ann had a passion for all such family celebrations, and was somewhat renowned in her circle for her rich invention in this way. People talked far and wide about her skill and knowledge in getting up *tableaux vivans*, which, without her, could never be managed according to the rules of art.

"My dear friend," said Mary Ann, "we must have a *tableau*—a really divine tableau! The Madonna and Child—which shall be yourself and little Milla. A stone would be softened and affected by such a sight, and

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we will see whether we cannot in this way melt the cold and perverted heart of your husband."

The plan accorded perfectly with the present state of Helena's mind. An instinctive feeling compelled her, as it were, to seek for some pleasure, because a temperament gay and cheerful as hers was by nature, could not be lamenting and weeping forever, but must of necessity seek some change.

"Oh, yes!" said Helena gaily, and clapped her hands, arrange it all, dearest Mary Ann. I can with a little rouge make a very tolerable Madonna (they are not always so very handsome,) and Milla will make the very sweetest little Jesus that ever was seen!—and then we'll invite mamma and papa, and my brothers and sisters, and—"

"Fie, Helena!" interrupted Mary Ann, with severity, "you must not exhibit yourself as the Holy Mother of God before all these people! I fancied that it was merely to give a pleasure to your husband, and if possible to give another direction to his worldly mind, not to take place in a great company; and if you ask one, then you

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must ask all; if your parents are invited, you must invite Albert's also, and thus the whole thing will become a mere evening show, and its peculiar and sacred intention will be lost."

"Yes, you are quite right!" said Helena, with a little sigh, and with far less animation of voice than formerly, "we will have a *tableau* merely for Albert, he will all the more value the trouble we take for him."

"That is exactly my idea," replied Mary Ann, and then began to consider which Madonna with the Child Helena should represent; she knew them all; more than a dozen Madonnas by different masters in Rome, Milan, Florence, in Dresden, Paris, and Heaven knows where.

After a great deal of deliberation, after the arrangement of many a plan and its abandonment, it was, at length, determined which Madonna out of all the number should be adopted. All the little arrangements which were now necessary gave quite another turn and another coloring to Mary Ann's visits, and when at length the birth-day came, not a single trace of a tear was visible on He-

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lena's handsome young face, and Mary Ann assured her, that a more lovely Madonna could nowhere be found. This was a heart-felt joy to Helena, although she did not confess it to her cousin, and the thought flashed through her mind, that Albert, perhaps, *that once*, would think her handsome. Milla was at the first rehearsal very restless, but Caroline managed to fix her attention upon herself by help of a bright-colored toy, which she, concealed by the curtain, stood and showed her, softly saying, all the time—"Hush! hush!" and it was hoped that the same ingenious scheme would succeed at the real representation.

"Ah! if there were only *somebody else* besides Mary Ann to receive Albert!" thought Helena, when the time was come, and the clock struck six in the evening, and she sate with little Milla kicking her little legs about with all her might, on her knee, behind a great number of lights, and heard Albert come, and Mary Ann fussing and fidgetting about him. Immediately afterwards, she heard them come into the room; heard Mary Ann place him in a chair which had been set

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for him, and heard him ask in astonishment, "What in all the world is the meaning of this?"

Just then, however, Mary Ann drew up the curtain with great skill, and Albert experienced a holy, unmingled feeling of pure joy at the beautiful sight which he beheld. Delighted, he sprung forward, and would have clasped the mother and child to his breast, but Mary Ann attempted to keep him back by the coat-laps, that he might understand how faithfully the original had been followed in the arrangement of the picture; how excellent was the effect of the light; how beautiful and how—as if in a glory of sanctity and heavenly light—appeared the divine mother and child, admonishing to an amended life and repentance for sin. Mary Ann, in short, wished to address a few appropriate words to Albert for his edification, which she had prepared for the occasion; but Albert did not trouble himself about this at all; he let her scream and talk as best she would. Willingly leaving his coat-lap as her prize, he rushed forward and clasped Helena and Milla to his joy-overflowing heart.

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Nothing could equal his delight at seeing how well and cheerful Helena looked, and that Milla smiled at him instead of welcoming him with a fit of crying as she had hitherto done. Amid all this happiness, however, Albert could not help exclaiming,—

"But why was there nobody here to see this? Why were not papa and mamma, and my parents, and all our brothers and sisters allowed to enjoy this beautiful sight?"

Helena made no reply to this natural question, because she felt at this moment that Albert was perfectly right, and she sincerely wished that she had not allowed Mary Ann so easily to persuade her not to invite her beloved relations.

"Now go and put on your warm regular dress," said Albert to her, when his first exclamations of joy were over, "for in this light dress you may so easily take cold."

Helena went immediately to do his bidding, but as she had to dress herself completely, and in her happiness, as she wished to do this very carefully, and as little Milla also required some attention, and further-

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more, as she went into the kitchen to see that Albert's favorite dish, which she had ordered for supper, was nicely prepared, she was absent a considerable time, during which, Albert had no very agreeable *tete-a-tete* with Mary Ann. Helena thought about this, and therefore hastened back as soon as she possibly could, and when she entered the drawing-room, she was not a little distressed to hear the two engaged in a hot and obstinate dispute; neither seemed inclined to yield, and the eyes of both flashed with a fire which was not far from that of anger and indignation.

Albert had felt no good-will towards Mary Ann for a considerable time; he had often met her on the steps as he came home, and many a time he attributed his wife's tears to the visits of her cousin, and not unfrequently had he fancied that he detected her spirit in his wife's words. During Helena's absence, they had, by an unfortunate accident, chanced to begin talking about the well-known Madame Krudener, who travelled about preaching for the reformation and improvement of the human race, and who at length attached

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herself like a shadow to the Emperor Alexander, whom she perfectly knew how to manage. Albert spoke of her as of an adventuress, a fanatic, a mad-woman, etc.; who did more harm than good. Mary Ann, on the other side, who had read everything which any one had written, either for or against Madame Krudener, and who knew perfectly well, that she had not done anything wrong, at least, not intentionally, although she certainly had not been able to do all the good which she intended; called the celebrated lady one of the lights of Heaven; a prophetess, one of the inspired of God, a true seeress, gifted with great and supernatural powers, to look into futurity, and down into the hearts and souls of men.

Not without some little malice, Albert inquired with a smile, whether Mary Ann believed that such like "elected beings" were to be met with, or ever had been; to which Mary Ann replied with great warmth and violence, that she did not *almost* believe, but that she was fully, and firmly convinced of it, and that there were richly endowed natures, who, by prayer, renunciation, and self-

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sacrifice, having made themselves worthy of heavenly grace and inspiration, had been gifted by God with far greater and much more powerful abilities and endowments than are common among the indolent, miserable people of the world, who, deaf and blind to the light and to the heavenly calling, crawl in the dust, laugh, curse, doubt, and exalt themselves, instead of trusting, praying, hoping, and humbling themselves.

Mary Ann spoke a deal and vehemently on this subject, and at the same time directed keen and significant glances at Albert. For the first time Albert was now alone with Mary Ann, and being no longer kept within bounds by a gazing and listening circle of relatives, without weighing his words, or repenting his somewhat sarcastic laugh, he offered her first one and then another affront, about her self-love; her self-consequence, and the great opinion which she had of herself. Things were in this position when Helena returned to the room. The conversation, it is true, then took another turn, but it was constrained and wearisome. Albert yawned now and then, and Mary Ann sate and

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twirled her fingers and, cast from time to time, long, solemn, Madonna-like glances, in part upon Helena, and in part at the ceiling. Helena rang, and ordered supper to be served. But the supper turned out to be neither excellent nor agreeable; the veal-cutlets were burnt to a cinder, and the groats were burnt likewise, both which misfortunes had happened after Helena left the kitchen.

As soon as supper was over, Mary Ann took her leave, but not without whispering to Helena, that she feared that Albert was lost forever, both to her and to all good. These words distressed Helena extremely, as did also Albert's remark, as soon as Mary Ann was gone.

"What, in Heaven's name, dear, good Helena," said he, "had you to do with that tiresome Mary Ann? This evening might have been the most amusing, and the pleasantest I have had for a long time, if you had only spared me her company, or had had some others here besides that woman, who is so intolerable to me!"

Never before had Albert spoken in this way of the excellent Mary Ann, "the idol

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and oracle of every one," and Helena fancied that she could read in his disapprobation of her cousin, the same feeling towards herself, towards the little device of the evening, and everything else. She burst into tears, and and those flowed more hotly than ever, because they were the wormwood drops of disappointed hope. With despair in her heart, and, without saying a word, she went softly out of the room, and sate down, and wept, by the side of her sleeping child; and Albert on his part, with sorrow and trouble in his soul, went into his gloomy and solitary little library. For a whole hour, at least, he sate in the dull moonlight, pondering sadly on his fate, and comparing former times with the present, and then he rang and ordered the servant to bring him lights. When the lights came, how great was his astonishment, and at the same time his pleasure, to see the large, handsome, and long-wished-for chair, which Helena had presented to him, and with that he immediately observed,—what a deal of labor and pains she had taken, as well with it, as with a basket to throw paper in, which stood there, looking very elegant

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with its wreath of flowers. Now he repented a thousand times having vexed Helena with his angry invectives against her cousin, who perhaps had helped Helena with this great piece of needlework—perhaps, indeed, he had done the poor cousin a grievous wrong. He felt a great self-reproach, and would so gladly have recalled every word which had wounded her, or annoyed Helena. He would go, however, to his beloved wife, and retrieve his error, and thank her with all his heart; but Caroline said that she was already asleep, and above all things, he would not then disturb her.

Helena, however, was not asleep—she was weeping; but in the morning, when Albert, at nine o'clock, was compelled to go to his office, she really was asleep, and that as soundly and calmly as a pure spotless conscience and a healthy youthful frame alone can sleep. The chamber door stood ajar; Albert moved silently along the soft carpet, and stood by the bed-side, observing how sweetly and comfortably she lay. Her dark brown hair hung carelessly but beautifully over her white forehead and upon her round

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and rosy cheeks. One of her hands lay under her head, and the other rested upon the sky-blue silk coverlet. She breathed lightly and tranquilly. A little golden heart, containing Albert's hair, which he himself had given her in their courting days, and which she always wore round her neck with a black ribbon, now lay against her lovely red lips. For one moment little Milla began to cry in her cradle, and instantly Helena, still asleep, stretched out her arm, rocked it a little, and then, without opening her eyes, slept on soundly. Albert's eyes filled with tears, and at the same time he smiled tenderly at this beautiful and innocent scene. He wrote, therefore, upon one of his visiting cards a morning salutation and an affectionate expression of gratitude for the surprise and the gifts of the evening before. This done, he stuck the card into the frame of his wife's dressing-glass, feeling sure that she would see it there during the morning's toilet.

When Helena awoke, and found that her husband had already gone, she once more saluted the spring sun with tears. She

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had wished so much to have some talk with him; she wished to have asked his forgiveness for the folly, as she herself now called it, of having no one but Mary Ann there on his birthday. During the night she had many good and evil thoughts; had concluded that perhaps it was not right to let her cousin have so great an influence over her, especially when Albert did not like her; that there were many circumstances which Mary Ann did not thoroughly understand, and that she (Helena) ought to take care not to be infected by her cousin's extravagance in many things. And now, therefore, she wept because she could not confess all this to Albert, and beg of him not to be displeased with her. It annoyed her all the more, not to have seen him this morning, because this was one of the days when he would not return till evening, and at that time Milla was often so fretful, that there was but little time for conversation.

The card which Albert had left in the glass remained there unobserved of his wife, for her morning toilet was hastily made, and without one single glance in the mirror. Her

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hair hung negligently on her tearful cheeks; her dress was carelessly put on, and a large shawl thrown over all, completed her morning costume; and thus attired sate she at twelve o'clock by the side of her child's cradle, and rocked, and rocked, although the child slept soundly, when all at once she heard quick steps approaching the chamber. She pushed her hair back behind her ears, drew together the shawl, and with displeasure on her upper lip she looked to the door where she expected the unwelcome visitor with a "Hush!" to warn the intruder from waking the child.

But before the door opens, before the stranger enters, for it really is one, we must hastily sketch the portrait of *another* of Helena's cousins.

Of cousins Helena had many, and among these was Arabella, the most perfect antipodes of Mary Ann. She was ten or twelve years older than Helena, and had been married some years. She was no very great favorite with the large circle of their formal and precise relations; on the contrary, they almost all of them found fault with her.

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She was one whom people had always something to say against, and as Helena's mother was one of those who did not like her, she had never promoted much intimacy with her daughter, although Helena had always found her a most amusing, agreeable, and fascinating woman; and if aunts and uncles had not interfered, would willingly have made her her friend.

Arabella in her younger days had been a great beauty, and she still looked very handsome, although she had grown stout and large. She was a well-grown proportionable figure, carried herself magnificently, dressed remarkably well; had a splendid complexion, the most lively dark-brown eyes, rich and glossy black hair, and teeth like pearls, which she was always showing, because three-fourths of her life she was laughing. She was a most amusing and merry creature, and as she had the faculty of instantly detecting the weak side of a person, she found much to laugh at, which made many call her malicious; malicious, however, she was not, and had in fact more good qualities than the good relations gave her credit for.

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One cause of offence which she had given to her relations was the having rejected two or three rich lovers for one much poorer. But now she and her husband lived together in the utmost harmony, although he was not naturally of a good temper; he was, however, a well-educated, honorable and excellent man, devoted to his wife, and as she loved him with her whole heart, their home was one of entire happiness; and they were blessed with the sweetest children, who did the utmost credit to their training.

Arabella was much less liked in the circle of their relations than out of it, and one great cause of this was, that she never could endure Mary Ann—"poor Mary Ann," as she called her, and of whom everybody thought so much. Out of the circle of the relations, Albert had often met her, and he often spoke so highly of her to Helena, that in the first year of her marriage, when she was somewhat removed from under the influence of old associations, she rather courted than shunned Arabella's acquaintance, and began to see in her merits as well as faults.

Such was this "other cousin," who now,

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after having rapidly traversed kitchen, parlor, and servants' room, laid her hand on the handle of the chamber door, and softly but resolutely opened it. "Hush! hush!" said Helena, rocking the cradle, and nodded half-kindly to Arabella.

"Good morning! good morning! dearest Helena!" said she, cheerfully, "how are you? But what in the world do I see. Nay, for Heaven's sake, don't sit rocking the cradle when the baby is asleep! You are making a precious jewel of her! And I suppose you never have her out of your arms when she is awake! Dear Helena, in this way you will entirely spoil the child, and make her intolerable both to yourself and everybody else. Think, if I did so, what would become of me with my five?"

"But, have you nursed them yourself?" inquired Helena, willing to gain a little advantage over her cousin.

"That have I, but not without a little help either, because I did not find any advantage in making myself a nursery maid!" replied Arabella gaily, and in rather a loud voice, as was customary with her.

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"But then your children were always so healthy," said Helena, and rocked little Milla.

"That they certainly have been," returned Arabella, "but so was I, and cheerful and merry, and that did a great deal. You, however, look as melancholy as if you had the burden of the whole world on your shoulders. What can be the great trouble which casts you down so, dear Helena?" said she kindly, and drawing her chair closer to the low seat on which Helena sat by the cradle; "the child lies there as rosy and as fresh as a rose-bud, but as cross as a little tiger, because you have spoiled her."

"How can you say so about my little angel Milla?" said Helena, half-laughing, and took up the child, who now awoke with all this talk, because she had been accustomed to a death-like stillness.

"Come hither to me!" said Arabella, taking her in her arms to play with and dance her about, although she cried dreadfully; at length, however, she was silent out of pure astonishment at this new mode of entertainment.

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"Yes, yes, my little darling," said Arabella, "that is something different to lying on mamma's knee and grumbling. Look, Helena, how she laughs! Now we will lay her in the cradle again, because I want to have a little rational talk with you about her and other things."

To Helena's great astonishment Milla lay quiet in the cradle, spite of all the dancing and jumping, and looked silently on the strange lady.

"Yes, now I shall regularly begin with the beginning," said Arabella, laughing, "and tell you all that is said."

Helena looked amazed in the highest degree.

"Nay, dear child, do not look so astonished," continued Arabella, "people have not said anything that you yourself do not know!" And with this she began to count upon her fingers,—"First of all," said she, "that you have withdrawn from society on purpose to be a nursemaid; that you sit crying day and night over the child, although she is as healthy as a winter's rose; that you have driven your excellent and good-tem-

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pered husband off into his library, where you let him be solitary, like a poor dog in his kennel, that you may lie awake all night and kill yourself over that baby who lies there laughing; secondly, that you never dress your beautiful hair as you used to do, nor dress yourself nicely, either of which would be a pleasure to your husband; and, lastly, that you do not put the least confidence in Caroline, who is such a clever person with children, and——who has told me all this. I know her well, for she lived with me three years, and nursed my little Augustus, and never would I desire a better, and to tell you the truth, she was with us on Sunday, and then I did, what I am never accustomed to do, draw out of her that which I have now told you; and that, I confess, I did with design, for it is really dreadful to see how your charming and kind-hearted husband, troubles and distresses himself, believing that you are ill or unhappy, because you are always crying. And what in the world have you to cry for? Perhaps you fancy that your husband does not love you as much as formerly? I, however, can assure you that he does; be-

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cause those who see him now in society, and who used to see him formerly, can best observe that his altered manner is the consequence of his heartfelt trouble about you. He never talks with any other ladies, never looks at them, but sits there and plays at whist with as much indifference as a statue, and he used formerly to be so merry and cheerful. But if at any time he hears your name mentioned, he looks up hastily, just as if conversation about you was the only subject that interested him. I have remarked this, because I wished to try him. But you must remember that he is a *man*, and a *young man*, and you must not try his fidelity too severely, but endeavor to restore his cheerfulness before it be too late, and before he begins to seek amusements in which you can have no part."

"Ah! what would you that I should do?" said Helena, bursting into tears, for she felt that Arabella's intentions were kind towards her, and she was very much affected by the description of her husband's behavior in company; "what would you have me do? I would gladly do anything to make Albert

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happy at home, as he used to be, but I do not know *how*, or in what way, because I fancied that I did nothing but what it was my duty to do."

"Yes, my dear Helena, that you do, certainly!" said Arabella, shaking her head with comic solemnity, and so perfectly imitating Mary Ann, that Helena could not help laughing, "you certainly do something which you ought not; you shed tears, and have nothing at all to cry for; you do not put up your hair, nor dress yourself neatly in the morning; you wake Milla when she sleeps, and spoil her when she is awake. You are always in this chamber; you never go into the drawing-room; you never play or sing; you never call on any of your friends or relations; one never sees you at any parties or concerts where you used to go formerly, and to which you contributed so much pleasure. In a word, you have withdrawn yourself from everybody, even from your husband, and have become gloomy and uncompanionable; and, in conclusion," continued Arabella, "you have let that well-meaning but tiresome Mary Ann bewitch you, and fill your

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head with suspicions about your husband. I know very well, that she comes here morning and evening; and I know very well, too, that all this may lead to a great deal of mischief, although I must concede, that our worthy cousin means well, both towards you and others. I shall never forget," continued Arabella, in a tone half jesting, and half sorrowful, "when my little Henry died, and I grieved so that I thought I should lose my senses, that Mary Ann came to comfort me, and she comforted me till I thought I should go and drown myself. She means well, but she does not go the right way to work; and my husband had regularly to take me to task, and show me that one has no right to spend many hours a-day in weeping and lamenting, when one has a husband and children and a family to look after; so, instead of weeping, I dried my eyes, and did all in my power to be cheerful, as I had formerly been, and I was successful."

Helena sate and pondered on what she heard.

After this, Arabella began to talk about other things; and she told her many little

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occurrences out of the passing events of the day, and that in such an original and comic manner, that Helena laughed right heartily, and when this was done, up started Arabella, saying,—"Now, my dear Helena, I must go home. Good heavens! why it is three o'clock; and neither husband nor children will eat a morsel of dinner without me! Good bye;" and with that she was gone.

The first thing that Helena did, when her cousin had left the room, was to go up to the glass, and look whether she really was an ill-dressed, miserable-looking being as she had represented. It was then, for the first time, that she found her husband's little card, and her mind, which was disposed to be cheerful now, all at once became elevated into happiness.

She called in both Caroline and her maid; to the former, she said,—"You shall now take a little more charge of the child, and manage her as well as you can, for she is less peevish now than she used to be. She may cry a little at the beginning, but that will soon be over if you are kind and attentive to her;" and many other very discreet

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directions did she give, which Caroline promised to attend to.

"And now, Annette," said she to her maid, "I will have my hair carefully dressed today, and will put on one of my silk dresses, and a beautiful collar; and I mean, from this time, to dress myself nicely every day."

All this while she saw, with delight, that Milla lay quietly in her cradle, and played with her silver rattle which Arabella had given to her.

When Helena was dressed, she saw that she looked quite another being. She felt very happy. Albert's little card, and her cousin's description of him in society, whereby she was convinced that he had some affection for her, although the change in herself had grieved him so much, gave the most perfect comfort to her heart. She felt extremely obliged to Arabella, although, at the same time, she did not reject as worthless all that Mary Ann had counselled her to. On the contrary, at this very moment Helena showed that she could separate the wheat from the chaff—the gold from the dross—because she followed the advice of both. She

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did everything which Arabella wished her to do, and from the depths of her heart she offered up sincere thanks to God, who at length had opened her eyes; and she besought of him to do with her according to his good pleasure, assured that, then as at all times, her own advantage and happiness would be best cared for, even though at first it might be hard for her to bear.

She was contented, joyful, and happy, and only longed for the moment which should bring her husband home; the hours, however, went slowly, and before six or seven, she could not expect him. She took up a book, and then laid it down; took up her work, but that was tedious: every now and then she peeped in at little Milla, but the child was so comfortable, and so well cared for by the skilful and clever Caroline, that she found herself not needed. At length she opened the piano, blew the dust off it, and cleaned it thoroughly, and then began to sing and play. It was so long since she had done either, that she felt herself at first out of practice; by degrees, however, she got on better, and at length was so absorbed by

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it, that she did not hear the much-desired return of her husband, who entered the room, and going up to the piano, stood for a moment in delight to listen, before he clasped her to his heart, which was throbbing with the purest joy.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to add, that from this day all their former happiness and comfort returned to Albert and Helena, and that ever after they were as happy as people can be in this world, where *perfect* happiness never does spring up and blossom; where the heavens, indeed, are at times bright and strewn with stars whispering of a better life—but are also occasionally black with clouds, dark and misty, mourning because of the bitterness of this.

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THE CHILDREN.

BEAUTIFUL the children's faces;
Spite of all that mars and sears;
To my inmost heart appealing;
Calling forth love's tenderest feeling;
Steeping all my soul with tears.

Eloquent the children's faces—
Poverty's lean look, which saith,
Save us! save us! woe surrounds us;
Little knowledge sore confounds us:
Life is but a lingering death!

Give us light amid our darkness;
Let us know the good from ill;
Hate us not for all our blindness;
Love us, lead us, show us kindness—
You can make us what you will.

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We are willing; we are ready;
  We would learn if you would teach;
We have hearts that yearn towards duty;
We have minds alive to beauty;
  Souls that any heights can reach!

Raise us by your Christian knowledge:
  Consecrate to man our powers;
Let us take our proper station;
We, the rising generation,
  Let us stamp the age as ours!

We shall be what you will make us:—
  Make us wise, and make us good!
Make us strong for time of trial;
Teach us temperance, self-denial,
  Patience, kindness, fortitude!

Look into our childish faces;
  See ye not our willing hearts?
Only love us—only lead us:
Only let us know you need us,
  And we all will do our parts.

We are thousands—many thousands!
  Every day our ranks increase;
Let us march beneath your banner,
We, the legion of true honor,
  Combating for love and peace!

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Train us! try us! days slide onward,
They can ne'er be ours again:
Save us, save! from our undoing!
Save from ignorance and ruin;
Make us worthy to be MEN!

Send us to our weeping mothers,
Angel-stamped in heart and brow!
We may be our fathers' teachers:
We may be the mightiest preachers,
In the day that dawneth now!

Such the children's mute appealing
All my inmost soul was stirred;
And my heart was bowed with sadness,
When a cry, like summer's gladness,
Said, "The children's prayer is heard!"

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BEGINNING AND END

OF

MRS. MUGGERIDGE'S WEDDING-DINNER.

IT was quite a pleasure to peep into Mrs. Muggeridge's house, because it was so clean and so well furnished. It had three front windows and a door; on the door was a brass-plate, as bright as leather and whitening could make it; and on this plate was engraved, "J. Muggeridge, Gardener;" (it was a little bit of vanity, and all the neighbors said so); and there were nice white-fringed roller-blinds in the windows, the tassels of which were tied up in little

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frilled bags, and snow-white dimity curtains, besides, in the chambers. The house-floor was as bright as mopping every morning could make its red bricks; and every afternoon two yards of smart carpeting were laid down before the fire. The mahogany case of the eight-day clock, and the mahogany chest of drawers, which stood in the kitchen, were rubbed till they shone like looking-glasses. This clock and chest of drawers were the pride of Mrs. Muggeridge's kitchen; for these, with various articles of tin ware—all block-tin!—together with a bedstead and bedding, were her own contribution to the house-plenishing when she was married—to say nothing of a five and a ten-pound Bank of England bill, which she kept in a little red housewife, and which she had saved partly in service and partly by dress-making, in which she was very clever. Someway or other this clock and chest of drawers held a place in her heart; and yet, let it not be imagined that she had a small heart for all that—for, besides clock and chest of drawers, let me see how many other things, animate and inanimate, this heart

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of hers held. First and foremost came John Muggeridge—her first and her last love, as she always called him—a stout-built, ruddy-complexioned, brave-hearted man, of five and thirty; secondly, her two healthy, merry children, the youngest of which was nearly five—children that always looked clean and wholesome, even when grubbing up to the eyes in the dust of the little back garden; thirdly, the little *front* garden, with white cockle-shells set all round its borders, and its fine carnations, double stocks, and mignonette; and fourthly, her house, and all that it held—pots and pans included; and then I will leave it to any jury of intelligent readers whether Mrs. Muggeridge had a small heart or not.

It would have put any cynic into good humor to have seen John Muggeridge's arrival at home on a Saturday evening. Clean, and bright, and cheerful as things looked in an ordinary way, they were made to look ten times brighter to welcome that time. The flower-pots in the windows were quite dazzling with red-lead; the clock and chest of drawers had an additional polish; the win-

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dows were cleaned; the fire burned brightly; the kettle was boiling; the tea-things set out; and the children, glowing with their Saturday's washing, were looking out in a perfect ecstasy of impatience for his coming: and as to Mrs. Muggeridge, why, she did not take so much pains with herself on her wedding-day as she did now on a Saturday evening. Any man would have been proud to own such a bright-looking, neatly-dressed, loving woman for a wife!

Muggeridge was, as the brass-plate announced, a gardener; but not on his own account: he was in the employment of a gentleman in the neighborhood. He went to his work on a Monday morning, and returned home at the end of the week. He had good wages, but he did not spend much over himself; he regularly brought home full three-fourths of it. His wife was as economical and self-denying as himself through the week, but Sunday was an exception. There always was a little joint of meat for Sunday's dinner; a piece of a neck of mutton, or a little cut of beef, with potatoes under it, or a pudding, and a foaming tank-

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ard of good ale to wash it all down. It did Mrs. Muggeridge good to see the relish with which her husband ate his Sunday dinner, and it did him good to see how she and the children enjoyed it also.

Every Sunday Muggeridge might be seen fetching the dinner from the bakehouse, covered with a clean cloth, and in his Sunday clothes and his well-blacked shoes—they were his Sunday shoes, and his wife blacked them —and the eldest little child trotting by his side, talking in a loud voice all the way there and back. I wish everybody, with a heart to love the poor, had only seen for once the hearty appetites with which those dinners were eaten.

"What a relish there is in a bit of meat!" Muggeridge would say every time he held his plate for a second piece.—"Sure-ly, what a relish there is in a bit of meat!"

Mrs. Muggeridge knew a little more of life than her husband did; she had lived in service, and had eaten good dinners from one twelvemonth's end to another: she knew the taste of ducks, and geese, and chickens, and pigeons, as well as beef and mutton. All

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these were good, she said—very good, in their way; and she wished with all her heart that Muggeridge could only have a taste of all the good things she had eaten. Yes, these were all good, very! but after all, there was nothing that was cooked, either roasted or boiled, that equalled hare! What a shame it was, she said, that hares and such things were quite out of an honest, poor body's reach! There was something so indescribable about hare, with its savoury stuffing, and rich sauce, and currant jelly! It made her mouth water even to think of it, and she was sure it would do her good to see Muggeridge enjoying it. She knew very well, she said, how to cook a hare; for in one place where she had lived, she had been servant of all work, and her mistress, who often had hare, had been at a deal of trouble to teach her how to cook it; and then she went through all the detail of skinning, stuffing, skewering, and so on, till it came to its being cut up and eaten! Muggeridge, in idea, devoured the hare; he was sure, he said, that it must be good; and it was, as

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she said, a sin and a shame that hares were out of the reach of poor folks!

Mrs. Muggeridge used to say to her neighbors that she was a very happy woman, and had a deal to be thankful for in such a husband: he was so fond of her and the children; he had no pleasure out of his own house; see only how he contrived a bit of time on Saturday nights to do up the garden! and then she had such pleasure in minding it and the flowers he had in the pots, all the rest of the week: she had taken quite a liking to flowers because he was so fond of them. There was not, indeed, anything that she would not do to please him!

So said Mrs. Muggeridge; but, whenever she said so, she remembered one thing—one little thing—which we must explain. When her husband married her, she was carrying on a nice little dress-making business: she had laid by fifteen pounds, besides buying the bed, and clock, and chest of drawers. Muggeridge had saved what he called "a little bit of money:" he would have still been saving, had he remained a single man; but he never thought of this as any reproach to

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her, for he loved her and the children a deal better than money. But one thing troubled him, and that was, that his "little bit of money," and his wife's too, had been lost by lending, greatly against his own will and wishes, to a relation of Mrs. Muggeridge's, and he now had nothing but his wages to rely upon. On the loss of the money his wife had volunteered, considering that they had but two children, who now, as she said, were "nicely out of hand," to take to her dress-making again, in which she had such good reputation, and thus make an effort to gain some more money in the place of what was lost. Nothing in this world could have made Muggeridge more grateful to his wife than this voluntary offer. Unfortunately, however, it never went beyond the offer and the promise: she always said she meant to do it some time, but she had procrastinated so long that her husband had now no faith in the promise; and this was just the one discordant string between them. On the other side of the question, somebody had told her that, if he only *would*, he might get a five pound, now and then, by raising prize-

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flowers for the show; but he never did it. *She* blamed him, and *he* blamed her; and they might have gone on blaming one another to no purpose, year after year perhaps, had it not been for the dinner which she cooked on no other day in all the year but the 18th of December, which was the seventh anniversary of their wedding-day, and which fell that year on a Sunday.

"How Muggeridge *did* enjoy that bit of a neck of pork and apple-sauce last Sunday!" thought Mrs. Muggeridge to herself, as she was pondering during the week on what they should have next Sunday for their wedding-day's dinner; "I never saw him relish anything like that pork; and the pinch of dried sage and the mustard made it as good as goose! I do love to see that man enjoy his dinner! How he would like a hare!"

Mrs. Muggeridge thought of the hare again and again; she thought of the nice middle cut of the back, and the savoury stuffing, and the sauce and the currant jelly; and she thought if she could only, just for once, see that on her husband's plate, she should be perfectly happy. The idea stuck fast in

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her brain, she could not get it out again: "There's plenty of winter-savory and lemon thyme in the garden," thought she; "Muggeridge set that himself when I wanted to make a stuffing for heart;—and currant jelly, why one might get a sixpenny pot of that at the confectioner's, and what's left will do to give the children after physic, if they should want any. It will be a dear dinner," thought she, "any how; but just for once! At all events I can go and ask the price of a hare —there is no harm in *asking*."

The poulterer's and game-shops were full of hares, and pheasants, and turkeys—there was evidently no lack of such things. Mrs. Muggeridge wanted a hare for as little money as possible. She was in despair when she heard four-and-sixpence and four shillings asked; she could not afford above two shillings. The people asked her if she supposed that they stole their hares to sell them at that price. Mrs. Muggeridge turned round and walked home disconsolately, thinking that hares were not meant for poor folk's eating. When she reached her own door, she became, for the first time, aware that a

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big lad in leathern leggins and a smock-frock, whom she had noticed near the game-dealer's, had followed her home.

"Can I say a word to you, missis?" said he.

She took him in. He inquired if she wanted a hare; he said he had been selling some in the town, and that if she liked he would bring her a good one for two shillings, the price he had heard her offer.

Mrs. Muggeridge was delighted—it was the very thing she wanted, and she felt as if she could not be civil enough to him. The next night, after dusk, he brought the hare in a covered basket, and received the stipulated two shillings. Now what a dinner her husband should have on his wedding-day! but he should know nothing about it till it was time for him to begin eating. She begged him accordingly, on Sunday morning, to take the children out for a walk, as she meant to cook at home that day, instead of sending to the bakehouse; he did so, promising to return punctually at one o'clock.

The hare looked quite grand, twirling by a worsted string behind the little clothes-horse, on which she hung a clean sheet to

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make a hastener, before the fire; Mrs. Muggeridge was indefatigable in basting it. The savoury odour proceeded forth from the house; the neighbors seemed to do nothing all the morning but come a-borrowing, first salt, and then flour, and then a meat-saw, and everybody knew what a dinner the Muggeridges were going to have that day!

The hare was done to a turn as the husband and the children came in with the foaming tankard of ale which they had called for on their way; the sauce was poured into a milk-jug, and the currant jelly turned out in a saucer; the potatoes were smoking hot and fit for a lord's table. Muggeridge could hardly believe his senses when he came in, it smelt excellently, and there seemed such plenty of it! He tied on the children's pinafores and set them on tall chairs, and sharpened a knife for his wife to carve this unexpected delicacy, and seemed quite delighted with the compliment she had paid their wedding-day.

The middle cut of the back, with plenty of stuffing and gravy and currant jelly, was on his plate.

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"Now taste it, John," said his wife, impatient to see the effect it would produce; "I'd live on bread and water for a week to see you relish it properly!"

Muggeridge said it was good, very good! but he was not quite sure, whether the pork and apple-sauce last week was not as nice. Mrs. Muggeridge was shocked to hear him say so, and to please her he was helped a second time; the children ate the potatoes and gravy and currant jelly, as much as they could get, and left the hare—but then children are no judges!

Muggeridge went back on Monday morning to his work; and Mrs. Muggeridge lived contentedly on potatoes and salt in the memory of the sumptuous Sunday's dinner. In the midst of these pleasant reminiscences, what was her surprise and consternation to receive a visit from a constable, who presented a warrant issued by the then sitting magistrates. She must go along with him and answer for the high crime and misdemeanor of having bought a hare from an unlicensed dealer!

Poor Mrs. Muggeridge! if her own kitchen

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floor had opened and swallowed her up, she could not have looked in greater dismay. Before the bench of magistrates was she brought.

How had she become possessed of that hare? From whom had she bought it? Did she not know that she was amenable to the law for having purchased a hare from an unlicensed dealer?

"Oh Lord, no! how could she think she was doing any harm?" asked she.

"But what business had a person like her with a hare at all? The poor had nothing to do with game of any kind."

These words put poor Mrs. Muggeridge into a passion; and she said she meant no harm by what she had done—not she, indeed! She meant only to give her husband, who was an honest man, a treat on his wedding-day, and that was the reason she had a hare; and a very good reason too! But, added she, her wrath growing as she spoke, rich ladies who were fond of their husbands, to whom, however, hardly anything was a rarity, might buy just what they liked, and no harm done; but poor folks, who worked

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hard for every penny they got, could not get any little rarity at a price lower than the rich would give for it, without making criminals of themselves. That was the magistrate's law, she supposed.

The magistrates said that she was contumacious. The whole bench was against her; they insisted upon knowing from whom she had bought the hare. She could not tell them; for the very best of reasons, because she did not know herself. She told them so, and said, farther, that she did not think it was any business of hers to be asking folk's names before she bought anything from them, or to inquire if they were regularly licensed and qualified to sell! No indeed, that was no business of hers! All she knew was, that she had honestly bought and paid for the hare; and if the law made that a crime, why, then, the laws wanted mending, that was all she could say!

Her answer, and the temper in which it was given, did not please the magistrates at all. They said she ought to be sent to prison; but because she and her husband had hitherto

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borne respectable characters, and this was the first offence, she would merely be fined.

The fine and the costs, together, came to five pounds!

She stood quite confounded as this sum was named. Five pounds!

Yes, and she must either pay it or go to jail! She thought of the money which her own relation had robbed them of. She thought of what her husband would say. She groaned aloud, but said not a word, and felt ready to drop.

The magistrates did not seem to consider how next to impossible it must be for a poor woman like her to pay the fine; they waited for her answer, however.

"I have some good furniture," at length she said, "a capital chest of drawers, and a good eight-day clock; either of them is worth the money, if your worships cannot make it easier for me—for I meant no harm—not the least—and have always borne a good character!—Cannot your worships make it easier to me?"

No! the magistrates said they could do nothing of this kind, and that she must

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think herself very leniently dealt with as it was.

A warrant was, therefore issued to seize furniture to the amount of fine and costs; and she went home balancing in her mind which she would rather lose, clock or chest of drawers. She decided upon the latter, for said she to herself, John would miss the clock most, and the house would be so lonesome without it. A clock is, as one may say, a sort of live thing that keeps one company.

The men, however, said that the chest of drawers was not enough by itself, nor the clock either, so they must have them both; and spite of all the poor woman said, so they had. They told her for her consolation, however, that they should be sold, and whatever money was over, it should be sent to her. But no money ever came.

Mrs. Muggeridge sate quite heart-broken in her desolated kitchen; the pride of her eyes was gone. She felt as if she should never take pleasure in anything again—she hated the very idea of hare. She was so very miserable that she could not help scolding the children.

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"Whatever will Muggeridge say?" thought she again and again; and while she was thus thinking the door opened and in he walked. "The news had just reached him," he said, "and his master, who had blamed him for buying a hare under any circumstances, had allowed him to come home and see after things."

It quite overcame poor Mrs. Muggeridge to see that her husband was not angry with her. They sate down by the fire together, each took a child on their knee, and the children were soon fast asleep. There was something very soul-cementing and consolatory in their thus sitting, side by side, in their trouble, without either upbraiding the other.

"I'll tell you what, John, I have positively made up my mind to," began Mrs. Muggeridge, after a long pause; "I'll take again to my dress-making, as you wish, and as I have so long promised—that I will! and I'll never rest till we have got this money, and other money too, back again! You shall see, John," she said, "that good may come

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out of evil. I'll begin dress-making to-morrow morning, that I will."

"Ay, do, my lass," said John, taking her hand kindly; "do, and we shall, may be, be none the poorer in the end by our losses—and I'll tell you what I will do too—it's what master has wanted me to do a long time—as well as you—I'll grow those flowers for the show; I know I shall succeed if I only begin—for when once I begin in good earnest nobody can beat me."

"Well, now, I am pleased," said poor Mrs. Muggeridge, ready to cry; "and I'll tell you what, John, we won't fret ourselves any more about the loss of the money and these things, but we'll set to, and get more; and after this, what we get we shall keep."

They *did* get more, and they turned it to good account too.

Fifteen years afterwards, the time at which we are writing, the house, which is now their own, and to which considerable additions have been made, looks as bright as ever; and the fields at the back of the house, which they have now on lease, and mean to buy, is a large, flourishing nursery-ground and gar-

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den; and John Muggeridge and his two sons, the eldest a fine young man, turned twenty, and half a dozen men besides, are busy at work in it; while Mrs. Muggeridge, as buxom and cheerful as when she was young, and her three pretty daughters,—for when she began dress-making she had lots of children—make the house inside more cheerful even than a summer flower-garden.

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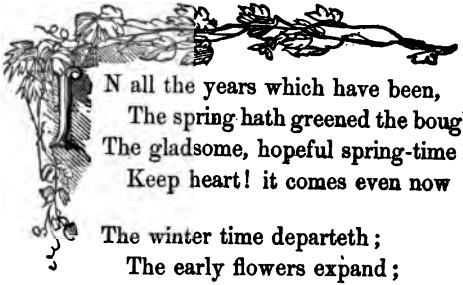
COMING SPRING.



IN all the years which have been,
The spring hath greened the bough—
The gladsome, hopeful spring-time!—
Keep heart! it comes even now

The winter time departeth;
The early flowers expand;
The black-bird and the turtle-dove
Are heard throughout the land.

The sadness of the winter,
Which gloomed our hearts, is gone;
A thousand sighs betoken
That spring-time comes anon!

'T is spring-time in our bosoms;
All strife aside we cast;
The storms were for the winter days,
But they are gone and past. on

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Before us lies the spring-time—
  Thank God! the time of mirth—
When birds are singing in the trees,
  And flowers gem all the earth;

When a thousand busy hands upturn
  The bounteous, fruitful mould
And the heart of every poet feels
  More love than it can hold,

In all the years which have been,
  The spring-time greened the bough—
The gentle, gracious spring-time!—
  Rejoice!—it comes even now.

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THE TAX-GATHERER'S VISIT.

T about the distance of a mile from Remete, in a valley lying high among the hills, stands the Rusniak village of H—. The most superficial glance over the surrounding country would suffice to make the observer acquainted with the occupation and means of subsistence of its inhabitants, and that by such unmistakable evidences as not even the uniform winter garment of nature can conceal. Upon the snow-covered ascents of both sides of the valley, and above the leafless branches of the underwood, fresh heaps of refuse or rubbish from the mines elevate themselves like molehills; and amidst this very rubbish, and

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especially in the more extensive and older growth of wood which covers some portion of the hills, may be seen ascending, to the very horizon, immense columns of smoke, which indicate the kilns of the charcoal-burner. Among these, and in direct lines down the descent, run the hollow roads; along which, by locking all the four wheels, the copper ore and the charcoal are conveyed to the smelting-houses. All these roads merge in the high-road, which is cut up with ruts a foot deep, and which, running along the valley parallel with the river, conducts us at once into the village of H—.

It was approaching the hour of noon, when a sledge, drawn by four horses, was seen advancing along this road towards the village. The extraordinary mode by which the driver contrived to keep his horses in a continued trot, might excite the mind of the spectator either to merriment or pity according to his own temper. This driver was seated upon a wooden saddle, totally uncovered, and of a most simple construction, which, with scarcely anything under it, was set upon the bare ribs of one of the hinder horses; and with

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his whip-handle he made such violent exertions that all his limbs were kept in perpetual movement, and his body was thus preserved from freezing. The cold was intense; and not only was the man's neck bare, but his ancles also, as the trousers did not reach to the botskori, or shoes, worn by the peasant.

Scarcely had this sledge reached the middle of the village and drawn up before the public-house, when all the dogs were in a great state of activity; and not the dogs only, but the inhabitants also of all the little low wooden houses of which the village was composed. Bare-footed girls and boys were soon seen hurrying along the street; and the speed with which they moved, as well as the peculiar expression of their countenances, indicated that the person who had just now arrived in the sledge had the power of exercising some formidable influence on the inhabitants. This sentiment was still further proved when, somewhat later, the elder people began to assemble before the constable's house, casting, from time to time, looks of serious anxiety towards the inn. And there must have been reason why all should be

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thus anxiously uneasy; for even upon the constable, the head man in the village, this visit seemed to have produced the most disagreeable effect. Scarcely was he aware of the arrival, when he sprang up from his noon-day repast, over which he had been engaged, and, snatching up his walking-stick, the badge of his dignity, he hurried off to a cottage at four doors' distance from his own house.

Arrived here, he entered the room with a bowed head, and found the whole peasant family, consisting of seven persons, sitting at dinner. His salutation to them was in the bitter words of a curse. Now, although the constable was reckoned a bold, determined sort of a man, and although it was by no means his custom to bend before his equals, yet he was compelled in this instance, as he was in entering most peasants' houses, to assume a position of humility, because the lofty domineering air of office would have placed his head in the clouds of smoke which filled the upper part of the room, and which could not find ready vent through the hole which was made in the wall between the windows for its exit.

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Below the height of this hole the peasants' houses are free from smoke; but as, singularly enough, it is made lower than the height of a grown man, every one who has reached this size, and who cannot inhale smoke readily, is compelled to keep his head in the lower region of the purer air.

"Now *you* fellow, you!" began the constable, in his bent position, and in the greatest rage; "how have you kept your word with me? Do you mean to give me the three gulden or not? you gipsy!* Now, here is Mr. B—come here himself about the taxes, and I have not yet had one single kreutzer from you! Am I to be flogged on your account? you rascal! Will you give me, or will you not, the three gulden? If you will not, I will carry away your door and windows!"

The impression which this speech made upon the party sitting round the table was very various. At the first sound of the constable's voice, the two youngest children, greatly terrified, raised a shrill cry; this set

* To call a man a gipsy, in this country, is equivalent to calling him a liar—TRANSLATOR.

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the next two eldest crying likewise; and then, as if invited by this quartette to join in chorus, the calf, which was tied at the foot of the stove, began to bleat; and this roused the whole brood of chickens under the stove, which struck in with its many-voiced staccato.

Notwithstanding all this cursing, and crying, and commotion, the master of the house, who sat at the table, maintained the most perfect composure, and kept eating his linseed oil and potatoes as if he heard nothing of all that went forward. The mother alone seemed to feel every word which the man had spoken, as so many daggers, and trembled through her whole frame, the while she busied herself in pacifying her two youngest children.

"Now, Oëtko, how much longer shall I wait here? Do you mean to give me the three gulden or not?" again inquired the constable, in the utmost state of wrath.

"Begone to the devil with you! I cannot carve you the money out of my soul! I have not a single heller in the house!" returned the man, at once thrown off his guard. He

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was again about to resume his pretended indifference, when it so happened that he dropped a hot potato into the burning fat, which at once confused him, and he reddened. After this the storm burst forth on his side; and only the tables between them, and the smoke above them, prevented the two angry men from coming to close quarters. At length the constable elevated his stick, and reared himself up to the full height of his dignity, in order to represent to the negligent payer of taxes the certain consequences that awaited him; but, as he lifted his head, he happened to get his mouth into the stratum of smoke, and thus brought his lungs into such a conflicting state, that they would no longer serve him for any purposes of speech. With his body still more bowed than when he entered, he now withdrew from the room, not omitting, however, in passing, to lift the door off its hinges, and carry it away with him to his own house.

In less time than it will take to read this, two under-constables, or vice-constables, forced the two frozen windows out of their frames, and carried them away also in the same di-

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rection as the door had already taken. These windows, let us remark, in passing, were, like all in the village, neither of glass nor of paper, but formed from the inner integument of the cow's stomach, prepared for the purpose.

The misery in the house was now great. With tears and abjurations, the poor mother sought to defend her four half-naked children from the bitter cold. With the self sacrificing love of a mother she threw her own fur cloak over them, and tried to wrap them in the bed-covering, even as the mother-bird shields her young under her wings.

The keen winds of an unusually severe winter soon were blowing from every point of the compass through the wretched room. Driven almost to despair, and bending over her children, the mother sat with her bare feet on the earthen floor, and had compassion on the little calf near the stove. With a heart agitated by intensest anguish, she directed her prayers above for help and for pity. Simple as she was, she knew that man's greatest enemy is man; that a more icy wind swept through the gulf between

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two human hearts, than that which now penetrated her room; and she knew that the nursling at her breast now drew in with the bitter milk the seed of that cold inhumanity which would make it, in after life, repel its old mother.

Ah, Almighty Father! in what way have these creatures, called men, sinned, that they should deserve punishment such as this for so many thousands of years? I cannot believe that this beautiful world is solely and eternally destined for a place of oppression and of suffering to the bad: I cannot believe it—no! Thou art too wise for that!

The cries of the children having now been, in some degree, appeased by the mother, she herself, in the excess of her suffering, and, perhaps, also in the excitement of despair, burst forth into a loud lamentation, which resounded to her neighbors in the street. But, as we before remarked, help was not to be looked for from others. Fairly bewildered by all this, and greatly excited also, the father paced backwards and forwards in the cold room, kept continually knocking the empty pipe in his empty hand,

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and sought for his tobacco-bag, which he commonly had about him. At length he remained standing before his wife, and said to her in a kind and almost beseeching voice,—

"Go, wife, and bring that piece of linen, that I may carry it to the host of the public-house; perhaps he will give me three schein gulden for it."

"No!" returned his wife, fiercely; "no! I will give nothing! And even if I and my children must perish of cold, I will give nothing! What reason had you to spend all the money in liquor, you drunkard! Why did you not pay the tax out of that last money you received for carriage?—Oh, unfortunate woman that I am!"

"What is the use of talking thus? As if I were the only person in the village who had not paid the tax! There are more than one-half of the peasants who are in my case," remarked he, in the conciliatory tone of one who would excuse himself; and then added deprecatingly, "then I will take the calf and carry it to the host."

"No! no! Nothing at all!" exclaimed the woman, raising herself up from the bed.

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"They may cudgel you, before I will let you carry anything out of the house to sell."

"Woman! don't enrage me! You know me!" said the husband, sternly.

"And I would rather that you should strike me down dead, than that you should carry anything out of the house!" said she, in violent passion, and placed herself exactly before him as he advanced towards the calf. He, however, pushed her roughly aside; seized the calf, threw it on his shoulder, and went with it out of the door in the direction of the public-house.

The wife, in a state of desperation, ran after him: the renewed cries of her children, however, and the deep snow, prevented her, and sent her back to the cold room, where she at length was compelled to stop up the windows with such portions of the bedding as could best be spared.

With the exception of a Russian military guard-room, there can scarcely be a more simply furnished apartment, consisting of four walls, than the public-house of this village; or even, we may say, than any public-house in Hungary. A long table, and two

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benches of the same length, each formed of a beam sawn in two, with props of the most natural construction, represent exactly the necessary and the only furniture of such places. If to this be added the large, round stove of clay which stands within a railing in one corner of the room, whilst the other corner is partitioned off with boards, within which the sale of the liquors takes place; and furthermore, add to these the walls grown yellow with damp and thaw, and the floor composed only of earth, the reader may then form a very correct idea of the interior of that village beer-house to which we would conduct him.

Having entered it, let us now discover something of the parties who breathe its atmosphere.

"He seems to-day to be very much out of sorts. How he scolds the driver!" said one peasant to another, as he scraped off the frost from the window-pane with his finger nail.

"Certainly! There will be something up in the village to-day," returned the one addressed, who at the same time attempted to peep through the frozen window, and con-

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tinued, "Oh! what a great fur cloak Mr. B has got!"

"It is of wolf!" said the first speaker.

"How like a fool you talk! Can't you see that it is made of bear-skin!"

"Look ye, look; Oetko is bringing his half to sell," exclaimed one.

"And there the petty constable is bringing all the forfeited goods!" remarked the other.

"Now, God have pity on all those who at this season have not paid their tax! It is cold enough to freeze them to death!"

"Look! look! There comes the priest! Most likely he would pay a visit to Mr. B. to inquire after the poor, and to make entreaties for the constable."

"Now, I wonder whether it is true that he received from the city authorities of St. Petersburgh a golden breviary as a new year's gift?" asked a peasant who stood to the right of the window from his neighbor.

"Certainly, he has had it from there. Don't you remember some years ago, how gracious the Emperor Alexander was to our parish? If he had not travelled through this place, our church would not have been finished yet."

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"What is that there? what is it?" cried the voice of a drunken guest behind them, as he raised himself with a half-filled flask of brandy from the table and tumbled against the window. "Who is it that's outside?" cried he, striking his hard fist at once through the window-pane, and staring out at the empty sledge. The host, who in the meantime had become aware of the damage done to the window, hastened forward and said to the man—

"You must pay for that window, Gaidass."

"Don't make such a bawling, you rascal!" returned the drunken man, and then broke forth into curses and abuse.

In the meantime the servant of the newly arrived official came into the room, and the angry man was obliged to restrain himself. The calm, however, could not be of long continuance. The drunken fellow felt a delight in letting loose his spite on the servant in his white travelling cloak, and boots, and spurs.

"You are a rogue," exclaimed he, "as well as your master. Are you come here to suck our blood, you rascal!"

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Scarcely, however, had he uttered these words, when the host and a young man named Janko, who had that moment entered, stepped up to him and conjured him, in God's name, to keep silent, and to retract what he had already said, if he did not wish to taste the cudgel.

"I was fourteen years a soldier," returned the man, "and I have tasted more cudgel blows than you all together; and I am not a bit afraid of them. But such a beggarly tax-gatherer as that I would shoot down," screamed he, in the greatest rage, making an attempt to fall upon the servant, from doing which he was withheld by Janko. The servant, however, returning the curses with which he was assailed, hastened out of the house in order to make known the assertions of the old soldier.

Before long, therefore, the whole magistracy of the village entered the room, laid hands on the disturber, bound him, and hurried him instantly out of the beer-house, across the street into durance.

Whilst this was going on, the possessor of the calf entered, and endeavored to drive a

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bargain with the host. The latter, however, being well aware of the advantage which he had over the peasant, made use of every means, and of every obstacle and impediment he could devise, to beat down the price of the calf to about one-half of its worth.

"Five gulden will I give you for it, if you like; and two of them you must leave against your debt;" said the host, and with these words he closed the long bargaining.

"But at all events, Mr. Host, you will give me a pound of salt into the bargain," said the peasant; "I have not had a single grain of salt in my house for fourteen days."

"Not a kreutzer above five gulden," returned the host; "but I will trust you a few pounds, if you will only promise me to keep the day of payment punctually."

The poor man at length consented to the proposal in silence, and the bargain was closed.

"Mr. Host, trust me three kreutzers'-worth of brandy, and I will certainly pay you at Easter," said Janko, in a beseeching tone, whilst he was at the trouble of drawing the

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slip of wood, on which his debts were scored, out of his sleeve.

"No, fellow!" returned the host.

"Nay, do, I pray you: see, here is my rowasch;* there is just room upon it for a groschen.'

"No, no!" again repeated the host.

"Now may you be burnt, you and your whole concern! you ——!" cried Janko, greatly excited: concealed again his record of debt, and seated himself close to his former neighbor, who was lucky enough to get a half-pint of brandy on trust.

"Drink, Janko," said this one, and offered him the bottle, in return for which he received a "God bless you!"

* By *rowasch* is understood those two well-known tallies which serves as debtor and creditor accounts among the peasants of the country, and of the whole of Russia, who can neither write nor read. The master of the beer-house; the huckster; nay, even the under bailiff carries his ledger in a ring or an iron wire, and only adds to the amount on the wooden score, which the peasant presents to him beseechingly, and with the assurances of certain and speedy payment, when there is space upon the tally which is to be found on the iron wire, to add either a 10, 5, or even a 1. When the debtor pays his score the former figures are all planed off, and a new account begins.

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"Ha; folks! the constable is going to be flogged!" exclaimed a fellow, rushing into the room.

"And why so?" asked Janko, astonished.

"Why so!" observed his neighbor; "how can you ask such a foolish question? for what do constables get beaten?—because he has not got the whole amount of tax for the new year. That's the reason why."

"Poor wretch!" said the host, who stood within his wooden partition; "poor fellow; his wife cried when he was chosen to the office, knowing beforehand that he was too good a man for a constable, and that, on that account, he never would do for constable."

"Let's go and see, however; let's go and see;" cried a voice in the room, and the greater number of those present, among whom was Janko, hastened out to enjoy the spectacle of their chief man being beaten in the presence of the stern receiver of taxes, and surrounded by his lamenting family.

All this took place in the year of our Lord, 1830.

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